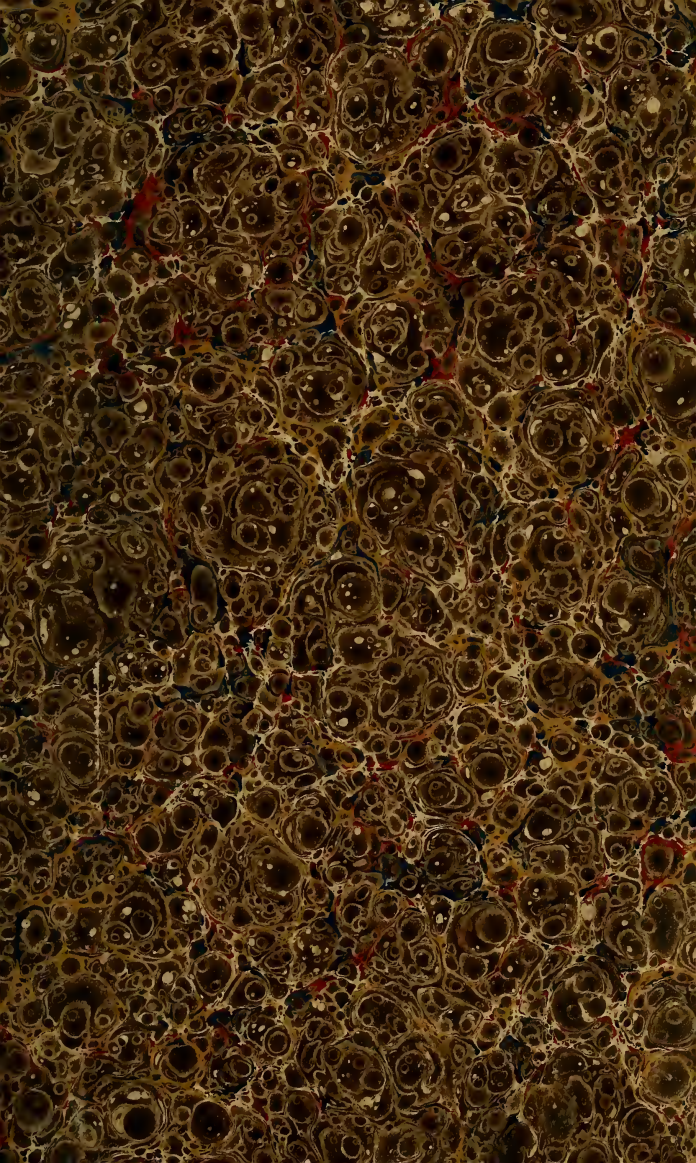


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# TOM CRINGLE'S

## LOG.

“ I am as a weed,  
Flung from the rock on ocean's foam to sail,  
Where'er the surge may sweep, the tempest's breath prevail.”

CHILDE HAROLD.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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# TOM CRINGLE'S LOG.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE CRUISE OF THE FIREBRAND.

*Showing, amongst other pleasant matters well worthy of being recorded,  
how Thomas communed with his two Consciences.*

“ Oh, who can tell, save he whose heart hath tried,  
And danced in triumph o'er the waters wide,  
The exulting sense, the pulse's maddening play,  
That thrills the wanderer of that trackless way ? ”

*The Corsair.*

WE had to beat up for three days before we could weather the east end of Jamaica, and tearing work we had of it. I had seen bad weather and heavy seas in several quarters of the globe—I had tumbled about under a close-reefed main-topsail and reefed foresail, on the long seas in the Bay of Biscay—I had been kicked about in a seventy-four, off the Cape of Good Hope, as if she had been a cork—I had been hove hither and thither, by the short jumble of the North Sea, about Heligoland, and the shoals lying off the mouth of the Elbe, when every thing over head was black as thunder, and all beneath as white as snow—I had enjoyed the luxury of

being torn in pieces by a north-wester, which compelled us to lie-to for ten days at a stretch, under storm stay-sails, off the coast of Yankeeland, with a clear, deep, cold, blue sky above us, without a cloud, where the sun shone brightly the whole time by day, and a glorious harvest moon by night, as if they were smiling in derision upon our riven and strained ship, as she reeled to and fro like a wounded Titan; at one time buried in the trough of the sea, at another cast upwards towards the heavens by the throes of the tormented waters, from the troubled bosom of the bounding and roaring ocean, amidst hundreds of miniature rainbows, (ay, rainbows by night as well as by day,) in a hissing storm of white, foaming, seething spray, torn from the curling and rolling bright green crests of the mountainous billows. And I have had more than one narrow squeak for it in the neighbourhood of the “still vexed Bermoothes,” besides various other small affairs, written in this *Boke*; but the devil such another tumblification had I ever experienced—not as to danger, for there was none except to our spars and rigging, but as to discomfort—as I did in that short, cross, splashing, and boiling sea, off Morant Point. By noon, however, on the second day, having had a slant from the land-wind in the night previous, we got well to windward of the long sandy spit that forms the east end of the island, and were in the act of getting a small pull of the weather braces, before edging away for St Jago, when the wind fell suddenly, and in half an hour it was stark calm—“*una furiosa calma*,” as the Spanish sailors quaintly enough call it.

We got rolling tackles up, and the topgallant-masts down, and studding-sails out of the tops, and lessened the lumber and weight aloft in every way we could think of, but, nevertheless, we continued to roll gunwale under,

dipping the main-yardarm into the water every now and then, and setting every thing adrift, below and on deck, that was not bolted down, or otherwise well secured.

When I went down to dinner, the scene was extremely good. Old Yerk, the first lieutenant, was in the chair—one of the boys was jammed at his side, with his claws fastened round the foot of the table, holding a tureen of boiling pease-soup, with lumps of pork swimming in it, which the aforesaid Yerk was baling forth with great assiduity to his messmates. Hydrostatics were much in vogue—the tendency of fluids to regain their equilibrium (confound them, they have often in the shape of claret destroyed mine) was beautifully illustrated, as the contents of each carefully balanced soup-plate kept swaying about on the principle of the spirit level. The doctor was croupier, and as it was a return dinner to the captain, all hands were regularly figged out, the lieutenants, with their epaulets and best coats, and the master, purser, and doctor, all fittingly attired. When I first entered, as I made my obeisance to the captain, I thought I saw an empty seat next him, but the matter of the soup was rather an engrossing concern, and took up my attention, so that I paid no particular regard to the circumstance; however, when we had all discussed the same, and were drinking our first glass of Teneriffe, I raised my eyes to hob and nob with the master, when—ye gods and little fishes—who should they light on, but the merry phiz—merry, alas! no more—of Aaron Bang, Esquire, who, during the soup interlude, had slid into the vacant chair unperceived by me.

“Why, Mr Bang, where, in the name of all that is comical, *where have* you dropped from?” Alas! poor Aaron—Aaron in a rolling sea was of no kindred to Aaron ashore.

His rosy gills were no longer rosy—his round plump face seemed to be covered with parchment from an old bass-drum, cut out from the centre where most bronzed by the drumstick—there was no speculation in his eyes that he did glare withal—and his lips, which were usually firm and open, disclosing his nice teeth, in frequent grin, were held together, as if he had been in grievous pain. At length he did venture to open them—and, like the ghost of Hamlet's father, “it lifted up its head and did address itself to motion, as it would speak.” But they began to quiver, and he once more screwed them together, as if he feared the very exertion of *uttering* a word or two might unsettle his moniplies.

The master was an odd garrulous small man, who had a certain number of stated jokes, which, so long as they were endured, he unmercifully inflicted on his messmates. I had come in for my share, as a new comer, as well as the rest; but even with me, although I had been but recently appointed, they had already begun to pall, and wax wearisome; and blind as the beetle of a body was, he could not help seeing this. So poor Bang, unable to return a shot, sea-sick and crestfallen, offered a target that he could not resist taking aim at. Dinner was half over, and Bang had not eaten any thing, when, unseasonable as the hour was, the little pot-valiant master, primed with two tumblers of grog, in defiance of the captain's presence, fairly fastened on him, like a remora, and pinned him down with one of his long-winded stories about Captain David Jones, in the *Phantome*, during a cruise off Cape Flyaway, having run foul of a whale, and thereby nearly foundered; and that at length having got the monster harpooned and speared, and the devil knows what, but it ended in getting her alongside, when they scuttled the leviathan, and then, wonderful to relate, they



found a Greenlandman, with royal yards crossed, in her maw, *and the captain and mate in the cabin quarrelling about the reckoning.*

“What do you think of that, Mr Bang—as well they might be, Mr Bang—as well they might be?” Bang said nothing, but at the moment—whether the said Aaron lent wings to the bird or no I cannot tell—a goose, swimming in apple sauce, which he was, with a most stern countenance, endeavouring to carve, fetched way right over the gunwale of the dish; and taking a whole boat of melted butter with it, splashed across the table during a tremendous roll, that made every thing creak and groan again, right into the small master’s lap, who was his *vis-à-vis*. I could hear Aaron grumble out something about—“Strange affinity—birds of a feather.” But his time was up, his minutes were numbered, and like a shot he bolted from the table, sculling or rather clawing away towards the door, by the backs of the chairs, like a green parrot, until he reached the marine at the bottom of the ladder, at the door of the captain’s cabin, round whose neck he immediately fetterlocked his fins.

He had only time to exclaim to his new ally, “My dear fellow, get me some brandy and water, for the love of mercy”—when he blew up, with an explosion like the bursting of a steam-boiler—“Oh dear, oh dear,” we could hear him murmuring in the lulls of his agony—then another loud report—“there goes my yesterday’s supper—hot grog and toasted-cheese”—another roar, as if the spirit was leaving its earthly tabernacle—“dinner—claret—Madeira—all cruel bad in a second edition—cheese, teal, and ringtail pigeon—black crabs—calapi and turtle-soup”—as his fleshly indulgences of the previous day rose up in judgment against him, like a man’s evil deeds on his death-bed. At length the various *strata*

of his interior were entirely excavated—"Ah!—I have got to my breakfast—to the simple tea and toast at last.—Brandy and water, my dear Transom, brandy and water, my darling, hot, without sugar"—and "Brandy and water" died in echoes in the distance as he was stowed away into his cot in the captain's cabin. It seems that it had been all arranged between him and Captain Transom, that he was to set off for St Thomas in the East, the morning on which we sailed, and to get a shove out in the pilot-boat schooner, from Morant Bay, to join us for the cruise; and accordingly he had come on board the night previous when I was below, and being somewhat qualmish he had wisely kept his cot; the fun of the thing depending, as it seemed, on all hands carefully keeping it from me that he was on board.

I apprehend most people indulge in the fancy that they have *Consciencess*—such as they are. I myself now—even I, Thomas Cringle, Esquire, amongst sundry vain imaginings, conceive that *I* have a *Conscience*—somewhat of the caoutchouc order I will confess—stretching a little upon occasion, when the gale of my passions blows high—nevertheless a highly respectable *Conscience*, as things go—a stalwart unchancy customer, who will not be gainsaid or contradicted; but he may be disobeyed, although never with impunity. It is all true that a young, well-fledged gentlewoman, for she is furnished with a most swift pair of wings, called *Prosperity*, sometimes gets the better of *Master Conscience*, and smothers the *Grim Feature* for a time, under the bed of eider down, whereon you and her ladyship are reposing. But she is a sad jilt in many instances, this same *Prosperity*; for some fine morning, with the sun glancing in through the crevices of the window-shutters, just at the nick when, after turning yourself, and rubbing your eyes, you cou-

rageously thrust forth one leg, with a determination to don your gramashes without more delay—"Tom," says she, "Tom Cringle, I have got tired of you, Thomas; besides, I hear my next door neighbour, Madam Adversity, tirling at the door pin; so give me my down-bed, Tom, and I'm off." With that she bangs open the window, and before I recover from my surprise, launches forth, with a loud *whir*, matrass and all, leaving me, Pilgarlic, lying on the paillasse. Well, her nest is scarcely cold, when in comes me Mistress *Adversity*, a wee outspoken—sour—crabbit—*gizzened* anatomy of an old woman—"You *ne'er doweel*, Tam," quoth she, "is it no enough that you consort with that scarlet limmer, who has just yescaped thorough the winday, but ye maun smoor my first-born, puir *Conscience*, atween ye? Whare hae ye stowed him, man—tell me that?" And the ancient damosel gives me a shrewd clip on the skull with the poker. "That's right, mother," quoth *Conscience*, from beneath the straw matrass—"Give it to him—he'll no hear me—another *devel*, mother." And I found that my own weight, deserted as I was by that—ahem—Prosperity, was no longer sufficient to keep him down. So up he rose, with a loud *pech*; and while the old woman keelhauled me with a poker on one side, he yerked at me on the other, until at length he gave me a regular cross-buttock, and then between them they diddled me outright. When I was fairly floored, "Now, my man," said Adversity, "I bear no spite; if you will but listen to my boy there, we shall be good friends still. He is never unreasonable. He has no objections to your consorting even with Madam Prosperity, in a *decent* way; but he will not consent to your letting her get the better of you, nor to your doting on her, even to the giving her a share of your bed, when she should never be allowed to

get farther than the servants' hall, for she should be kept in subjection, or she'll ruin you for ever, Thomas.—Conscience is a rough lad, I grant you, and I am keen and snell also ; but never mind, take his advice, and you'll be some credit to your freens yet, ye scoonrel." I did so, and the old lady's visits became shorter and shorter, and more and more distant, until at length they ceased altogether ; and once more *Prosperity*, like a dove with its heaven-borrowed hues all glowing in the morning sun, pitched one morning on my window-sill. It was in June. " Tom, I am come back again." I *glowered* at her with all my bir. " Aiblins"—said I, but I could go no farther. She made a step or two towards me, and the lesson of Adversity was fast evaporating into thin air, when, lo ! the sleeping *lion himself* awoke. " Thomas," said Conscience, in a voice that made my flesh creep, " not into your bed, neither into your bosom, Thomas. Be civil to the young woman, but remember what your best friend Adversity told you, and never let her be more than your handmaiden again ; free to come, free to go, but never more to be your mistress." I screw myself about, and twist, and turn in great perplexity—Hard enough all this, and I am half-inclined to try to throttle Conscience outright.

But to make a long story short—I was resolute—" Step into the parlour, my dearest—I hope we shall never part any more ; but you must not get the upper hand, you know. So step into the other room, and whenever I get my inexpressibles on, I will come to you there."

But this *Conscience*, about which I am now *havering*, seldom acts the monitor in this way, unless against respectable crimes, such as murder, debauching your friend's wife, or stealing. But the *chield* I have to do with for the present, and who has led to this rigmarole, is a sort



of *deputy Conscience*, a looker-out after small affairs—peccadilloes. The *grewsome carle*, *Conscience Senior*, you can grapple with, for he only steps forth on great occasions, when he says sternly—and the mischief is, that what he says, we know to be true—says he, “Thomas Cringle”—he never calls me Tom, or Mister, or Lieutenant—“Thomas Cringle,” says he, “if you do that thing, you shall be damned.” “Lud-a-mercy,” quoth I, Thomas, “I will perpend, Master Conscience”—and I set myself to eschew the evil deed, with all my might. But *Conscience the Younger*—whom I will take leave to call by Quashie’s appellative hereafter, *Conshy*—is a funny little fellow, and another guess sort of a chap altogether. An instance—“I say, Tom, my boy—Tom Cringle—why the *deuce* now”—he won’t say “the Devil” for the world—“Why the deuce, Tom, don’t you confine yourself to a pint of wine at dinner, eh?” quoth *Conshy*. “Why will you not give up your toddy after it? You are ruining your interior, Thomas, my fine fellow—the gout is on the look-out for you—your legs are spindling, and your paunch is increasing. Read Hamlet’s speech to Polonius, Tom, and if you don’t find all the marks of premature old age creeping on you, then am I, *Conshy*, a Dutchman, that’s all.” Now *Conshy* always lectures you in the watches of the night; I generally think his advice is good at breakfast time, and during the forenoon, egad, I think it excellent and most reasonable, and I determine to stick by it—and if *Conshy* and I dine alone, I do adhere to his maxims most rigidly; but if any of my old allies should topple into dinner, *Conshy*, who is a solitary mechanic, bolts instanter. Still I remember him for a time—we sit down—the dinner is good. “I say, Jack, a glass of wine—Peter, what shall we have?” and until the pint a-piece is discussed, all is right between *Conshy* and I.

But then comes some grouse. Hook, in his double-refined nonsense, palavers about the blasphemy of *white* wine after *brown* game—and he is not far wrong either ;—at least I never thought he was, *so long as my Hermitage lasted* ; but at the time I speak of, it was still to the fore—so the moment the pint a-piece was out, “ Hold hard, Tom, now,” cheeps little Conshy. “ Why, only one glass of Hermitage, Conshy.” *Conshy* shakes his head. Cheese—after the manner of the ancients—Hook again—“ Only one glass of port, *Conshy*.” He shakes his head, and at length the cloth is drawn, and a confounded old steward of mine, who is now installed as butler, brings in the crystal decanters, sparkling to the wax-lights—poor as I am, I consider mutton fats damnable—and every thing as it should be, down to a finger-glass. “ Now, Mary, where are the children ?” I am resolute. “ Jack, I can’t drink—out of sorts, my boy—so mind yourself, you and Peter.—Now, *Conshy*,” says I, “ where are you *now*, my boy ?” But just at this instant, Jack strikes out, with “ Cringle, order me a tumbler—something hot—I don’t care what it is.”—“ Ditto,” quoth Peter ; and down crumbles all my fine fabric of resolutions, only to be rebuilt to-morrow, before breakfast again, or at any odd moment, when one’s flesh is somewhat fishified.—Another instance. “ I say, Tom,” says *Conshy*, “ do give over looking at that smart girl tripping it along t’other side of the street.”—“ Presently, my dear little man,” says I. “ Tight little woman that, Conshy ; handsome bows ; good bearings forward ; tumbles home sweetly about the waist, and tumbles out well above the hips ; what a beautiful run ! and spars clean and tight ; back-stays well set up.”—“ Now, Tom, you vagabond, give over. Have you not a wife of your own ?”—“ To be sure I have, Conshy, my darling ; but *toujours per*”—“ Have done, now, you are going too

far," says Conshy.—"Oh, you be——". "THOMAS," cries a still stern voice, from the very inmost recesses of my heart. Wee Conshy holds up his finger, and pricks his ear. "Do you hear *him*?" says he.—"I hear," says I, "*I hear and tremble.*" Now, to apply. Conshy has been nudging me for this half hour to hold my tongue regarding Aaron Bang's sea-sickness.—"It is absolutely indecent," quoth he.—"Can't help it, Conshy; no more than the extra tumbler; those who are delicate need not read it; those who are indelicate won't be the worse of it."—"But," persists *Conshy*—"I have other hairs in your neck, Master Tommy—you are growing a bit of a buffoon on us, and sorry am I to say it, sometimes not altogether, as a man with a rank imagination may construe you, a very decent one. Now, my good boy, I would have you to remember that what you write is *condemned* in the pages of Old Christopher to an *amber immortalization*," (Ohon for the Provost!) "nay, don't perk and smile, I mean no compliment, for you are but the *straw* in the *amber*, Tom, and the only wonder is, *how* the deuce you got there."

"But, my dear *Conshy*"——

"Hold your tongue, Tom—let me say out my say, and finish my advice—and how will you answer to my father, in your old age, when youth, and health, and wealth, may have flown, if you find any thing in this your Log calculated to bring a blush on an innocent cheek, Tom, when the time shall have for ever passed away wherein you could have remedied the injury? For *Conscience will* speak to you then, not as I do now, in friendly confidence, and impelled by a sincere regard for you, you right-hearted, but thoughtless, slapdash vagabond."

There must have been a great deal of absurd perplexity

in my visage, as I sat receiving my rebuke, for I noticed *Conshy* smile, which gave me courage.

“I will reform, *Conshy*, and that immediately ; but my *moral* is good, man.”

“Well, well, Tom, I will take you at your word, so set about it, set about it.”

“But, *Conshy*—a word in your starboard *lug*—why don’t you go to the fountain-head—why don’t you try your hand in a curtain lecture on Old Kit North himself, the hoary sinner who seduced me ?”

*Conshy* could no longer contain himself; the very idea of old Kit having a *conscience* of any kind or description whatever, so tickled him, that he burst into a most uproarious fit of laughter, which I was in great hopes would have choked him, and thus made me well quit of him for ever. For some time I listened in great amazement, but there was something so infectious in his fun, that presently I began to laugh too, which only increased his cachinnation, so there were *Conshy* and I roaring, and shouting, with the tears running down our cheeks.

“Kit listen to me !—Oh, Lord”——

“You are swearing, *Conshy*,” said I, rubbing my hands at having caught *him* tripping.

“And enough to make a Quaker swear,” quoth he, still laughing. “No, no, Kit never listens to me—why, he would never listen even to my father, until the gout and the Catholic Relief Bill, and last of all, the Reform Bill, broke him down, and softened his heart.”

So there is an allegory for you, worthy of John Bunyan.

Next morning we got the breeze again, when we bore away for Santiago de Cuba, and arrived off the Moro Castle on the fifth evening at sunset, after leaving Port Royal harbour. The Spaniards, in their better days, were

a kind of coral worms; wherever they planted their colonies, they immediately set to covering themselves in with stone and mortar; applying their own entire energies, and the whole strength of their Indian captives, first to the erection of a fort; their second object (postponed to the other only through absolute necessity) being then to build a temple to their God. Gradually vast fabrics appeared, where before there was nothing but one eternal forest, or a howling wilderness; and although it does come over one, when looking at the splendid moles, and firm-built bastions, and stupendous churches of the New World—the latter surpassing, or at the least equalling in magnificence and grandeur those of Old Spain herself—that they are all cemented by the blood and sweat of millions of gentle Indians, of whose harmless existence in many quarters, they remain the only monuments, still it is a melancholy reflection to look back and picture to one's self what Spain was, and to compare her, in her high and palmy state, with what she is now—to compare her present condition even with what she was, when, as a young midshipman, I first visited her glorious Transatlantic colonies.

Until the Peninsula was overrun by the French, Buenos Ayres, Laguayra, Porto Cavello, Maracaibo, Santa Martha, and that stronghold of the west, the key of the Isthmus of Darien, Cartagena de las Indias, with Porto Bello, and Vera Cruz, on the Atlantic shores of South America, were all prosperous and happy—“*Llenas de plata* ;” and on the Western coast, Valparaiso, Lima, Panama, and San Blas, were thriving and increasing in population and wealth. England, through her colonies, was at that time driving a lucrative trade with all of them; but the demon of change was abroad, blown thither by the pestilent breath of European liberalism. What a

vineyard for Abbé Sieyes to have laboured in ! Every *Capitania* would have become a purchaser of one of his cut and dried constitutions. Indeed he could not have turned them out of hand fast enough. The enlightened *few*, in these countries, were as a drop in the bucket to the unenlightened *many* ; and although no doubt there were numbers of the former who were well-meaning men, yet they were, one and all, guilty of that prime political blunder, in common with our Whig friends at home, of expecting a set of semi-barbarians to see the beauty of, and to conform to, their newfangled codes of free institutions, for which they were as ready as I am to die at this present moment. Bolivar, in his early fever of patriotism, made the same mistake, although his shrewd mind, in his later career, saw that a despotism, *pure or impure*—I will not qualify it—was your only government for the *savages* he had at one time dignified with the name of fellow-patriots. But he came to this wholesome conclusion too late ; he tried back it is true, but it would not do ; the fiend had been unchained, and at length hunted him broken-hearted into his grave.

But the men of mind tell us, that those countries are now going through the *political fermentation*, which by and by will clear, when the sediment will be deposited, and the different ranks will each take their acknowledged and undisputed stations in society ; and the United States are once and again quoted against we of the adverse faction, as if there were the most remote analogy between their population, originally composed of all the *cleverest scoundrels* of Europe, and the barbarians of Spanish America, where a few master spirits, all old Spaniards, did indeed for a season stick fiery off from the dark mass of savages amongst whom their lot was cast, like stars in a moonless night, but only to suffer a speedy eclipse from



the clouds and storm which they themselves had set in motion. We shall see. The *scum* as yet is uppermost, and does not seem likely to *subside*, but it may *boil over*. In Cuba, however, all was at the time quiet, and still is, I believe, prosperous, and that too without having come through this said blessed political fermentation.

During the night we stood off and on under easy sail, and next morning, when the day broke, with a strong breeze and a fresh shower, we were about two miles off the Moro Castle, at the entrance of Santiago de Cuba.

I went aloft to look round me. The sea-breeze blew strong, until it reached within half a mile of the shore, where it stopped short, shooting in cat's-paws occasionally into the smooth belt of water beyond, where the long unbroken swell rolled like molten silver in the rising sun, without a ripple on its surface, until it dashed its gigantic undulations against the face of the precipitous cliffs on the shore, and flew up in smoke. The entrance to the harbour is very narrow, and looked from my perch like a zig-zag chasm in the rock, inlaid at the bottom with polished blue steel; so clear, and calm, and pellucid was the still water, wherein the frowning rocks, and magnificent trees on the banks, and the white Moro, rising with its grinning tiers of cannon, battery above battery, were reflected *veluti in speculum*, as if it had been in a mirror.

We had shortened sail, and fired a gun, and the signal for a pilot was flying, when the captain hailed me. "Does the sea-breeze blow into the harbour yet, Mr Cringle?"

"Not yet, sir; but it is creeping in fast."

"Very well. Let me know when you can run in. Mr Yerk, back the main-topsail, and heave the ship to."

Presently the pilot canoe, with the Spanish flag flying

in the stern, came alongside ; and the pilot, a tall brown man, a *moreno*, as the Spaniards say, came on board. He wore a glazed cocked hat, rather an out-of-the-way finish to his figure, which was rigged in a simple Osna-burgh shirt, and pair of trowsers. He came on the quarterdeck, and made his bow to the captain with all the ease in the world, wished him a good morning, and taking his place by the quartermaster at the conn, took charge of the ship. “ Señor,” quoth he to me, “ is de harbour blow up yet ? I mean, you see de *viento* walking into him ?—de *terral*—dat is land-wind—has he cease ? ”

“ No,” I answered ; “ the belt of smooth water is growing narrower fast ; but the sea-breeze does not blow into the channel yet. Now it has reached the entrance.”

“ Ah, den make sail, Señor Capitan ; fill de main-top-sail.” We stood in, the scene becoming more and more magnificent as we approached the land.

The fresh green shores of this glorious island lay before us, fringed with white surf, as the everlasting ocean in its approach to it gradually changed its dark blue colour, as the water shoaled, into a bright joyous green under the blazing sun, as if in sympathy with the genius of the fair land, before it tumbled at his feet its gently swelling billows, in shaking thunders on the reefs and rocky face of the coast, against which they were driven up in clouds, the incense of their sacrifice. The undulating hills in the vicinity were all either cleared, and covered with the greenest verdure that imagination can picture, over which strayed large herds of cattle, or with forests of gigantic trees, from amongst which, every now and then, peeped out some palm-thatched mountain settlement, with its small thread of blue smoke floating up into the calm clear morning air, while the blue hills in the distance rose higher and higher, and more and



more blue, and dreamy, and indistinct, until their rugged summits could not be distinguished from the clouds through the glimmering hot haze of the tropics.

“By the mark seven,” sung out the leadsman in the starboard chains.—“Quarter less three,” responded he in the larboard, showing that the inequalities of the surface at the bottom of the sea, even in the breadth of the ship, were at least as abrupt as those presented above water by the sides of the natural canal into which we were now running. By this time, on our right hand, we were within pistol-shot of the Moro, where the channel is not above fifty yards across; indeed there is a chain, made fast to a rock on the opposite side, that can be hove up by a capstan until it is level with the surface of the water, so as to constitute an insurmountable obstacle to any attempt to force an entrance in time of war. As we stood in, the golden flag of Spain rose slowly on the staff at the Water Battery, and cast its large sleepy folds abroad in the breeze; but, instead of floating over mail-clad men, or Spanish soldiers in warlike array, three poor devils of half-naked mulattoes stuck their heads out of an embrasure under its shadow. “Señor Capitan,” they shouted, “*una botella de Roma, por el honor del pais.*” We were mighty close upon leaving the bones of the old ship here, by the by; for at the very instant of entering the harbour’s mouth, the land-wind checked us off, and very nearly hove us broadside on upon the rocks below the castle, against which the swell was breaking in thunder.

“Let go the anchor,” sung out the captain.

“All gone, sir,” promptly responded the boatswain from the forecastle. And as he spoke, we struck once, twice, and very heavily the third time. But the breeze coming in strong, we fetched way again; and as the

cable was promptly cut, we got safely off. However, on weighing the anchor afterwards, we found the water had been so shoal under the bows, that the ship, when she stranded, had struck it, and broken the stock short off by the ring. The only laughable part of the story consisted in the old cook, an Irishman, with one leg and half an eye, scrambling out of the galley nearly naked, in his trowsers, shirt, and greasy nightcap, and sprawling on all fours after two tubsful of yams, which the third thump had capsized all over the deck. "Oh you scurvy-looking tiew," said he, eyeing the pilot; "if it was running us ashore you were set on, why the blazes couldn't ye wait until the yams were in the copper, bad luck to ye—and them all scraped too! I do believe, *if they even had been tatoes, it would have been all the same to you.*" We stood on, the channel narrowing still more—the rocks rising to a height of at least five hundred feet from the water's edge, as sharply and precipitously as if they had only yesterday been split asunder; the splintered projections and pinnacles on one side having each their corresponding fissures and indentations on the other, as if the hand of a giant could have closed them together again.

Noble trees shot out in all directions wherever they could find a little earth and a crevice to hold on by, almost meeting overhead in several places, and alive with all kinds of birds and beasts incidental to the climate; parrots of all sorts, great and small, *clomb*, and hung, and fluttered amongst the branches; and pigeons of numberless varieties; and the glancing woodpecker, with his small hammerlike *tap, tap, tap*; and the West India nightingale, and humming-birds of all hues while cranes, black, white, and grey, frightened from their fishing-stations, stalked and peeped about, as awkwardly as a

warrant-officer in his long-skirted coat on a Sunday; while whole flocks of ducks flew across the mastheads and through the rigging; and the dragon-like guanias, and lizards of many kinds, disported themselves amongst the branches, not lazily or loathsomely, as we, who have only seen a lizard in our cold climate, are apt to picture, but alert, and quick as lightning, their colours changing with the changing light or the hues of the objects to which they clung, becoming literally in one respect portions of the landscape.

And then the dark, transparent crystal depth of the pure waters under foot, reflecting all nature so steadily and distinctly, that in the hollows, where the overhanging foliage of the laurel-like bushes darkened the scene, you could not for your life tell where the elements met, so blended were earth and sea.

“Starboard,” said I. I had now come on deck. “Starboard, or the main-topgallant-masthead *will be foul of the limb of that tree*. Foretop, there—lie out on the larboard fore-yardarm, and be ready to shove her off, if she sheers too close.”

“Let go the anchor,” struck in the first lieutenant.

Splash—the cable rumbled through the hause-hole.

“Now here are we brought up in paradise,” quoth the doctor.

“Curukity coo—curukity coo,” sung out a great bushy-whiskered sailor from the crows’ nest, who turned out to be no other than our old friend Timothy Tail-tackle, quite juvenilified by the laughing scene. “Here am I, Jack, a booby amongst the singing-birds,” crowed he to one of his messmates in the maintop, as he clutched a branch of a tree in his hand, and swung himself up into it. But the ship, as Old Nick would have it, at the very instant dropped astern a few yards in swinging to her

anchor, and that so suddenly, that she left him on his perch in the tree, converting his jest, poor fellow, into melancholy earnest. "Oh Lord, sir!" sung out Timothy, in a great quandary. "Captain, do heave-a-head a bit—Murder—I shall never get down again! Do, Mr Yerk, if you please, sir!" And there he sat twisting and craning himself about, and screwing his features into combinations evincing the most comical perplexity.

The captain, by way of a bit of fun, pretended not to hear him.

"Maintop there," quoth he.

The midshipman in the top answered him, "Ay, ay, sir."

"Not you, Mr Reefpoint; the captain of the top I want."

"He is not in the top, sir," responded little Reefpoint, chuckling like to choke himself.

"Where the devil is he, sir?"

"*Here*, sir," squealed Timothy, his usual gruff voice spindling into a small *cheep* through his great perplexity.

"*Here*, sir."

"What are you doing there, sir? Come down this moment, sir. Rig out the main-topmast-studding-sail-boom, Mr Reefpoint, and tell him to slew himself down by that long water-withe."

To hear was to obey. Poor Timothy clambered down to the fork of the tree, from which the withe depended, and immediately began to warp himself down, until he reached within three or four yards of the starboard foretopsail-yardarm; but the corvette *still* dropped astern, so that, after a vain attempt to hook on by his feet, he swung off into mid air, hanging by his hands.

It was no longer a joke. "Here, you black fellows in the pilot canoe," shouted the captain, as he threw them

a rope himself. "Pass the end of that line round the stump yonder—that one below the cliff, there—now pull like devils, pull."

They did not understand a word he said; but, comprehending his gestures, did what he wished.

"Now haul on the line, men—gently, that will do. Missed it again," continued the skipper, as the poor fellow once more made a fruitless attempt to swing himself on to the yard.

"Pay out the warp again," sung out Taitackle—"quick, quick, let the ship swing from under, and leave me scope to dive, or I shall be obliged to let go, and be killed on the deck."

"God bless me, yes," said Transom, "stick out the warp, let her swing to her anchor."

In an instant all eyes were again fastened with intense anxiety on the poor fellow, whose strength was fast failing, and his grasp plainly relaxing.

"See all clear to pick me up, messmates."

Taitackle slipped down to the extreme end of the black withe, that looked like a scorched snake, pressed his legs close together, pointing his toes downwards, and then steadying himself for a moment, with his hands right above his head, and his arms at the full stretch, he dropped, struck the water fairly, entering its dark blue depths without a splash, and instantly disappeared, leaving a white frothy mark on the surface.

"Did you ever see any thing better done?" said Yerk. "Why he clipped into the water with the speed of light, as clean and clear as if he had been a marlinspike."

"Thank heaven!" gasped the captain; for if he had struck the water horizontally, or fallen headlong, he would have been shattered in pieces—every bone would have been broken—he would have been as completely

smashed as if he had dropped upon one of the limestone rocks on the ironbound shore.

“Ship, ahoy!” We were all breathlessly looking over the side where he fell, expecting to see him rise again; but the hail came from the water on t’other side. “Ship, ahoy—throw me a rope, good people—a rope, if you please. Do you mean to careen the ship, that you have all run to the starboard side, leaving me to be drowned to port here?”

“Ah, Tailtackle! well done, old boy,” sung out a volley of voices, men and officers, rejoiced to see the honest fellow alive. He clambered on board, in the bight of one of twenty ropes that were hove to him.

When he came on deck the captain silyly said, “I don’t think you’ll go a birdnesting in a hurry again, Tailtackle.”

Tim looked with a most quizzical expression at his captain, all blue and breathless and dripping as he was; and then sticking his tongue slightly in his cheek, he turned away, without addressing him directly, but murmuring as he went, “A glass of grog now.”

The captain, with whom he was a favourite, took the hint. “Go below now, and turn in till eight bells, Tailtackle. Mafame,” to his steward, “send him a glass of hot brandy grog.”

“A northwester,” whispered Tim aside to the functionary; “half and half, tallow chops—eh!”

About an hour after this a very melancholy accident happened to a poor boy on board, of about fifteen years of age, who had already become a great favourite of mine from his modest, quiet deportment, as well as of all the gunroom officers, although he had not been above a fortnight in the ship. He had let himself down over the bows by the cable to bathe. There were several of his



comrades standing on the forecastle looking at him, and he asked one of them to go out on the spritsail-yard, and look round to see if there were any sharks in the neighbourhood; but all around was deep, clear, green water. He kept hold of the cable, however, and seemed determined not to put himself in harm's way, until a little wicked urchin, who used to wait on the warrant-officers' mess, a small meddling snipe of a creature, who got flogged in well-behaved weeks *only* once, began to taunt my little mild favourite.

"Why, you chicken-heart, I'll wager a thimbleful of grog, that such a tailor as you are in the water can't for the life of you swim out to the buoy there."

"Never you mind, Pepperbottom," said the boy, giving the imp the name he had richly earned by repeated flagellations. "Never you mind. *I* am not ashamed to show my naked hide, you know. But it is against orders in these seas to go overboard, unless with a sail underfoot; so I sha'n't run the risk of being tatooed by the boat-swain's mate, like some one I could tell of."

"Coward," muttered the little wasp, "you are afraid, sir;" and the other boys abetting the mischief-maker, the lad was goaded to leave his hold of the cable, and strike out for the buoy. He reached it, and then turned, and pulled towards the ship again, when he caught my eye.

"Who is that overboard? How dare you, sir, disobey the standing order of the ship? Come in, boy; come in."

My hailing the little fellow shoved him off his balance, and he lost his presence of mind for a moment or two, during which he, if any thing, widened his distance from the ship.

At this instant the lad on the spritsail-yard sung out quick and suddenly, "A shark, a shark!"

And the monster, like a silver pillar, suddenly shot up perpendicularly from out the dark green depths of the sleeping pool, with the waters sparkling and hissing around him, as if he had been a sea-demon rushing on his prey.

“Pull for the cable, Louis,” shouted fifty voices at once—“pull for the cable.”

The boy did so—we all ran forward. He reached the cable—grasped it with both hands, and hung on, but before he could swing himself out of the water, the fierce fish had turned. His whitish-green belly glanced in the sun—the poor little fellow gave a heart-splitting yell, which was shattered amongst the impending rocks into piercing echoes, and these again were reverberated from cavern to cavern, until they died away amongst the hollows in the distance, as if they had been the faint shrieks of the damned—yet he held fast for a second or two—the ravenous tyrant of the sea tug, tugging at him, till the stiff, taught cable shook again. At length he was torn from his hold, but did not disappear; the animal continuing on the surface crunching his prey with his teeth, and digging at him with his jaws, as if trying to gorge a morsel too large to be swallowed, and making the water flash up in foam over the boats in pursuit, by the powerful strokes of his tail, but without ever letting go his hold. The poor lad only cried once more—but such a cry—oh God, I never shall forget it!—and, could it be possible, in his last shriek, his piercing expiring cry, his young voice seemed to pronounce my name—at least so I thought at the time, and others thought so too. The next moment he appeared quite dead. No less than three boats had been in the water alongside when the accident happened, and they were all on the spot by this time. And there was the bleeding and



mangled boy, torn along the surface of the water by the shark, with the boats in pursuit, leaving a long stream of blood, mottled with white specks of fat and marrow in his wake. At length the man in the bow of the gig laid hold of him by the arm, another sailor caught the other arm, boat-hooks and oars were dug into and launched at the monster, who relinquished his prey at last, stripping off the flesh, however, from the upper part of the right thigh, until his teeth reached the knee, where he nipped the shank clean off, and made sail with the leg in his jaws.

Poor little Louis never once moved after we took him in.—I thought I heard a small still stern voice thrill along my nerves, as if an echo of the beating of my heart had become articulate. “Thomas, a fortnight ago you impressed that poor boy—who *was*, and *now is not*—out of a Bristol ship.” Alas! conscience spoke no more than the truth.

Our instructions were to lie at St Jago, until three British ships, then loading, were ready for sea, and then to convey them through the Caicos, or windward passage. As our stay was therefore likely to be ten days or a fortnight at the shortest, the boats were hoisted out, and we made our little arrangements and preparations for taking all the recreation in our power; and our worthy skipper, taught and stiff as he was at sea, always encouraged all kinds of fun and larking, both amongst the men and the officers, on occasions like the present. Amongst his other pleasant qualities, he was a great boat-racer, constantly building and altering gigs and pulling-boats, at his own expense, and matching the men against each other for small prizes. He had just finished what the old carpenter considered his *chef-d'œuvre*, and a curious affair this same masterpiece was. In the first place it

was forty-two feet long over all, and only three and a half feet beam—the planking was not much above an eighth of an inch in thickness, so that if one of the crew had slipped his foot off the stretcher, it must have gone through the bottom. There was a standing order that no man was to go into it with shoes on. She was to pull six oars, and her crew were the captains of the tops, the primest seamen in the ship, and the steersman, no less a character than the skipper himself.

Her name, for I love to be particular, was the Dragonfly; she was painted out and in of a bright red, amounting to a flame colour—oars red—the men wearing trousers and shirts of red flannel, and red net nightcaps—which common uniform the captain himself wore. I think I have said before that he was a very handsome man, but if I have not I say so now, and when he had taken his seat, and the *gigs*, all fine men, were seated each with his oar held upright upon his knees ready to be dropped into the water at the same instant, the craft and her crew formed to my eye as pretty a plaything for grown children as ever was seen. “Give way, men,” the oars dipped as clean as so many knives, without a sparkle, the gallant fellows stretched out, and away shot the Dragonfly, like an arrow, the green water foaming into white smoke at the bows, and hissing away in her wake.

She disappeared in a twinkling round a reach of the canal where we were anchored, and we, the officers, for we must needs have our boat also, were making ready to be off, to have a shot at some beautiful cranes that, floating on their large pinions, slowly passed us with their long legs stuck straight out astern, and their longer necks gathered into their crops, when we heard a loud shouting in the direction where the captain’s boat had vanished.

Presently the Devil's Darning Needle, as the Scotch part of the crew loved to call the Dragonfly, stuck her long snout round the headland, and came spinning along with a Spanish canoe manned by four negroes, and steered by an elderly gentleman, a sharp acute-looking little man, in a gingham coat, in her wake, also pulling very fast; however, the Don seemed dead beat, and the captain was in great glee. By this time, both boats were alongside, and the old Spaniard, Don Ricardo Campana, addressed the captain, judging that he was one of the seamen. "Is the captain on board?" said he in Spanish. The captain, who understood the language, but did not speak it, answered him in French, which Don Ricardo seemed to speak fluently, "No, sir, the captain is not on board; but there is Mr Yerk, the first lieutenant, at the gangway." He had come for the letter-bag he said, and if we had any newspapers, and could spare them, it would be conferring a great favour on him.

He got his letters and newspapers handed down, and very civilly gave the captain a dollar, who touched his cap, tipped the money to the men, and winking slightly to old Yerk and the rest of us, addressed himself to shove off. The old Don, drawing up his eyebrows a little, (*I guess* he rather saw who was who, for all his make-believe innocence,) bowed to the officers at the gangway, sat down, and desiring his people to use their broad-bladed, clumsy-looking oars, or paddles, began to move awkwardly away. We, that is the gunroom-officers, all except the second lieutenant, who had the watch, and the master, now got into our own gig also, rowed by ourselves, and away we all went in a covey; the purser and doctor, and three of the middies forward, Thomas Cringle, gent., pulling the stroke-oar, with old Moses Yerk as coxswain;—and as the Dragonflies were all red, so we were all sea-

green, boat, oars, trowsers, shirts, and nightcaps. We soon distanced the cumbrous-looking Don, and the strain was between the *Devil's Darning Needle* and our boat, the *Watersprite*, which was making capital play, for although we had not the *bottom* of the *topmen*, yet we had more blood, so to speak, and we had already beaten them, in their last gig, all to sticks. But Dragonfly was a new boat, and now in the water for the first time.

We were both of us so intent on our own match, that we lost sight of the Spaniard altogether, and the captain and the first lieutenant were bobbing in the stern-sheets of their respective gigs like a couple of *souple Tams*, as intent on the game as if all our lives had depended on it, when in an instant the long black dirty prow of the canoe was thrust in between us, the old Don singing out, "*Dexa mi lugar, paysanos, dexa mi lugar, mis hijos.*"\* We kept away right and left, to look at the miracle;—and there lay the canoe, rumbling and splashing, with her crew walloping about, and grinning and yelling like incarnate fiends, and as naked as the day they were born, and the old Don himself, so staid and so sedate and drawley as he was a minute before, now all alive, shouting "*Tira, diablitos, tira!*"† flourishing a small paddle, with which he steered, about his head like a wheel, and dancing and jumping about in his seat, as if his bottom had been a *haggis* with quicksilver in it.

"Zounds," roared the skipper,—“why, topmen—why, gentlemen, give way for the honour of the ship—Gentlemen, stretch out—Men, pull like devils; twenty pounds if you beat him.”

We pulled, and they pulled, and the water roared, and the men strained their muscles and sinews to cracking;

\* “Leave me room, countrymen—leave me room, my children.”

† Equivalent to “Pull, you devils, pull!”

and all was splash, splash, and *whiz, whiz*, and *pech, pech*, about us, *but it would not do*—the canoe headed us like a shot, and in passing, the cool old Don again subsided into a calm as suddenly as he had been roused from it, and sitting once more, stiff as a poker, turned round and touched his *sombrero*, “I will tell that you are coming, gentlemen.”

It was now the evening, near nightfall, and we had been so intent on beating our awkward-looking opponent, that we had none of us had time to look at the splendid scene that burst upon our view, on rounding a precipitous rock, from the crevices of which some magnificent trees shot up—their gnarled trunks and twisted branches overhanging the canal where we were pulling, and anticipating the fast-falling darkness that was creeping over the fair face of nature; and there we floated, in the deep shadow of the cliff and trees—Dragonflies and Watersprites, motionless and silent, the boats floating so lightly that they scarcely seemed to touch the water, the men resting on their oars, and all of us rapt with the magnificence of the scenery around us, beneath us, and above us.

The left or western bank of the narrow entrance to the harbour, from which we were now debouching, ran out in all its precipitousness and beauty, (with its dark evergreen bushes overshadowing the deep blue waters, and its gigantic trees shooting forth high into the glowing western sky, their topmost branches gold-tipped in the flood of radiance shed by the rapidly sinking sun, while all below where we lay was grey cold shade,) until it joined the northern shore, when it sloped away gradually towards the east; the higher parts of the town sparkled in the evening sun, on this dun ridge, like golden turrets on the back of an elephant, while the houses that



were in the shade covered the declivity with their dark masses, until it sank down to the water's edge. On the right hand the haven opened boldly out into a basin about four miles broad by seven long, in which the placid waters spread out beyond the shadow of the western bank into one vast sheet of molten gold, with the canoe tearing along the shining surface, her side glancing in the sun, and her paddles flashing back his rays, and leaving a long train of living fire sparkling in her wake.

It was now about six o'clock in the evening ; the sun had set to us, as we pulled along under the frowning brow of the cliff, where the birds were fast settling on their nightly perches, with small happy twitterings, and the lizards and numberless other chirping things began to send forth their evening hymn to the great Being who made them and us, and a solitary white-sailing owl would every now and then flit spectrelike from one green tuft, across the bald face of the cliff, to another, and the small divers around us were breaking up the black surface of the waters into little sparkling circles as they fished for their suppers. All was becoming brown and indistinct near us ; but the level beams of the setting sun still lingered with a golden radiance upon the lovely city, and the shipping at anchor before it, making their sails, where loosed to dry, glance like leaves of gold, and their spars, and masts, and rigging like wires of gold, and gilding their flags, which were waving majestically and slow from the peaks in the evening breeze ; and the Moorish-looking steeples of the churches were yet sparkling in the glorious blaze, which was gradually deepening into gorgeous crimson, while the large pillars of the cathedral, then building on the highest part of the ridge, stood out like brazen monuments, softening even as we looked into a Stonehenge of amethysts. One half of every object, shipping,

houses, trees, and hills, was gloriously illuminated ; but even as we looked, the lower part of the town gradually sank into darkness, and faded from our sight—the deepening gloom cast by the high bank above us, like the dark shadow of a bad spirit, gradually crept on, and on, and extended farther and farther ; the sailing water-fowl in regular lines, no longer made the water flash up like flame ; the russet mantle of eve was fast extending over the entire hemisphere ; the glancing minarets, and the tallest trees, and the topgallant-yards and masts of the shipping, alone flashed back the dying effulgence of the glorious orb, which every moment grew fainter and fainter, and redder and redder, until it shaded into purple, and the loud deep bell of the convent of La Merced swung over the still waters, announcing the arrival of even-song and the departure of day.

“ Had we not better pull back to supper, sir ? ” quoth Moses Yerk to the captain. We all started, the men dipped their oars, our dreams were dispelled, the charm was broken—“ Confound the matter-of-fact blockhead,” or something very like it, grumbled the captain—“ but give way, men,” fast followed, and we returned towards the ship. We had not pulled fifty yards, when we heard the distant rattle of the muskets of the sentries at the gangways, as they discharged them at sundown, and were remarking, as we were rowing leisurely along, upon the strange effect produced by the reports, as they were frittered away amongst the overhanging cliffs in chattering reverberations, when the captain suddenly sung out, “ Oars ! ” All hands lay on them. “ Look there,” he continued—“ There—between the gigs—saw you ever any thing like that, gentlemen ? ” We all leant over ; and although the boats, from the *way* they had, were skimming along nearer seven than five knots—*there* lay

a large shark ; he must have been twelve feet long at the shortest, swimming right in the middle, and equidistant from both, and keeping *way* with us most accurately.

He was distinctly visible, from the strong and vivid phosphorescence excited by his rapid motion through the sleeping waters of the dark creek, which lit up his jaws, and head, and whole body ; his eyes were especially luminous, while a long wake of sparkles streamed away astern of him from the lashing of his tail. As the boats lost their speed, the luminousness of his appearance faded gradually as he shortened sail also, until he disappeared altogether. He was then at rest, and suspended motionless in the water ; and the only thing that indicated his proximity, was an occasional sparkle from the motion of a fin. We brought the boats nearer together, after pulling a stroke or two, but he seemed to sink as we closed, until at last we could merely perceive an indistinct halo far down in the clear black profound. But as we separated, and resumed our original position, he again rose near the surface ; and although the ripple and dip of the oars rendered him invisible while we were pulling, yet the moment we again rested on them, there was the monster, like a persecuting fiend, once more right between us, glaring on us, and apparently watching every motion. It was a terrible spectacle, and rendered still more striking by the melancholy occurrence of the forenoon.

“ That’s the very identical, damnable *baste* himself, as murdered poor little Louis this morning, yeer honour ; I knows him from the torn flesh of him under his larboard blinker, sir—just where Wiggens’s boathook punished him,” quoth the Irish captain of the mizentop.

“ A water-kelpie,” murmured another of the captain’s gigs, a Scotchman.



The men were evidently alarmed. "Stretch out, men; never mind the shark. He can't jump into the boat, surely," said the skipper. "What the deuce are you afraid of?"

We arrived within pistol-shot of the ship. As we approached, the sentry hailed, "Boat, ahoy!"

"Firebrand," sung out the skipper, in reply.

"Man the side—gangway lanterns there," quoth the officer on duty; and by the time we were close to, there were two sidesmen over the side with the manropes ready stuck out to our grasp, and two boys with lanterns above them. We got on deck, the officers touching their hats, and speedily the captain dived down the ladder, saying, as he descended, "Mr Yerk, I shall be happy to see you and your boat's-crew at supper, or rather to a late dinner, at eight o'clock; but come down a moment as you are. Tailtackle, bring the gigs into the cabin to get a glass of grog, will you?"

"Ay, ay, sir," responded Timothy. "Down with you, you flaming thieves, and see you don't snort and sniffle in your grog, as if you were in your own mess, like so many pigs slushing at the same trough."

"Lord love you, Tim," rejoined one of the topmen, "who made *you* master of the ceremonies, old Ironfist, eh? Where learnt you your breeding? Among the cockatoos up yonder?"

Tim laughed, who, although he ought to have been in his bed, had taken his seat in the Dragonfly when her crew were piped over the side in the evening, and thereby subjected himself to a rap over the knuckles from the captain; but where the offence might be said to consist in a too assiduous discharge of his duty, it was easily forgiven, unfortunate as the issue of the race had been. So down we all trundled into the cabin, masters and men.

It was brilliantly lighted up—the table sparkling with crystal and wine, and glancing with silver plate; and there on a sofa lay Aaron Bang in all his pristine beauty, and fresh from his toilet, for he had just got out of his cot after an eight-and-forty hours' sojourn therein—nice white neckcloth—white jean waistcoat and trowsers, and span-new blue coat. He was reading when we entered; and the captain, in his flame-coloured costume, was close aboard of him before he raised his eyes, and rather staggered him a bit; but when seven sea-green spirits followed, he was exceedingly nonplussed, and then came the six red Dragonflies, who ranged themselves three on each side of the door, with their net-bags in their hands, smoothing down their hair, and sidling and fidgeting about at finding themselves so far out of their element as the cabin.

“Mafame,” said the captain, “a glass of grog a-piece to the Dragonflies”—and a tumbler of liquid amber (to borrow from my old friend Cooper) sparkled in the large bony claw of each of them. “Now, drink Mr Bang’s health.” They, as in duty bound, let fly at our *amigo* in a volley.

“Your health, Mr Bang.”

Aaron sprung from his seat, and made his salaam, and the Dragonflies bundled out of the cabin again.

“I say, Transom, John Canoeing still—always some frolic in the wind.”

We, the Watersprites, had shifted and rigged, and were all mustered aft on the poop, enjoying the little air there was, as it fanned us gently, and waiting for the announcement of supper. It was a pitch-dark night, neither moon nor stars. The murky clouds seemed to have settled down on the mastheads, shrouding every object in the thickest gloom.

“Ready with the gun forward there, Mr Catwell?” said Yerk.

“All ready, sir.”

“Fire!”

Pent up as we were in a narrow channel, walled in on each side with towering precipitous rocks, the explosion, multiplied by the echoes into a whole broadside, was tremendous, and absolutely deafening.

The cold, grey, threatening rocks, and the large overhanging twisted branches of the trees, and the clear black water, and the white Moro in the distance, glanced for an instant, and then all was again veiled in utter darkness, and down came a rattling shower of sand and stones from the cliffs, and of rotten branches, and heavy dew from the trees, sparkling in the water like a shower of diamonds; and the birds of the air screamed, and, frightened from their nests and perches in crevices, and on the boughs of the trees, took flight with a strong rushing noise, that put one in mind of the rising of the fallen angels from the infernal council in *Paradise Lost*; and the cattle on the mountain-side lowed, and the fish, large and small, like darts and arrows of fire, sparkled up from the black abyss of waters, and swam in haloes of flame round the ship in every direction, as if they had been the ghosts of a shipwrecked crew, haunting the scene of their destruction; and the guanas and large lizards which had been shaken from the trees, skimmed and struggled on the surface in glances of fire, like evil spirits watching to seize them as their prey. At length the screaming and shrieking of the birds, the clang of their wings, and the bellowing of the cattle, ceased; and the startled fish subsided slowly down into the oozy caverns at the bottom of the sea, and becoming motionless, disappeared; and all was again black and undistinguishable, the deathlike si-

lence being only broken by the hoarse murmuring of the distant surf.

“Magnificent!” burst from the captain. “Messenger, send Mr Portfire here.” The gunpowder functionary, he of the flannel cartridge, appeared. “Gunner, send one of your mates into the maintop, and let him burn a blue light.”

The lurid glare blazed up balefully amongst the spars and rigging, lighting up the decks, and blasting the crew into the likeness of the host of Sennacherib, when the day broke on them, and they were all dead corpses. Astern of us, indistinct from the distance, the white Moro Castle reappeared, and rose frowning, tier above tier, like a Tower of Babel, with its summit veiled in the clouds, and the startled sea-fowl wheeling above the higher batteries, like snow-flakes blown about in a storm; while, near at hand, the rocks on each side of us looked as if fresh splintered asunder, with the sulphureous flames which had split them still burning; the trees looked no longer green, but were sicklied o’er with a pale ashy colour, as if sheeted ghosts were holding their midnight orgies amongst their branches—cranes, and waterfowl, and birds of many kinds, and all the insect and reptile tribes, their gaudy noontide colours merged into one and the same fearful deathlike sameness, flitted and sailed and circled above us, and chattered, and screamed, and shrieked; and the unearthly-looking guanas, and numberless creeping things, ran out on the boughs to peer at us, and a large snake twined itself up a scathed stump that shot out from a shattered pinnacle of rock that overhung us, with its glossy skin, glancing like the brazen serpent set up by Moses in the camp of the Israelites; and the cattle on the beetling summit of the cliff craned over the precipitous ledge to look down upon us; and

while every thing around us and above us was thus glancing in the blue and ghastly radiance, the band struck up a low moaning air; the light burnt out, and once more we were cast, by the contrast, into even more palpable darkness than before. I was entranced, and stood with folded arms, looking forth into the night, and musing intensely on the appalling scene which had just vanished like a feverish dream—"Dinner waits, sir," quoth Mafame.

"Oh! I am coming;" and kicking all my romance to Old Nick, I descended, and we had a pleasant night of it, and some wine and some fun, and there an end—but I have often dreamed of that dark pool, and the scenes I witnessed there that day and night.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE PIRATE'S LEMAN.

“ When lovely woman stoops to folly,  
And finds too late that men betray,  
What charm can soothe her melancholy,  
What art can wash her guilt away ?

“ The only art her guilt can cover,  
To hide her shame from every eye,  
To give repentance to her lover,  
And wring his bosom, is to die.”

*Vicar of Wakefield.*

“ *Ay Dios, si sera possible que he ya hallado lugar que pueda servir de escondida sepultura a la carga pesada deste cuerpo, que tan contra mi voluntad sostengo ?*”

*Don Quixote de la Mancha.*

THE next morning, after breakfast, I proceeded to Santiago, and landed at the customhouse wharf, where I found every thing bustle, dust, and heat ; several of the captains of the English vessels were there, who immediately made up to me, and reported how far advanced in their lading they were, and enquired when we were to give them convoy, the latest news from Kingston, &c. At length I saw our friend Ricardo Campana going along one of the neighbouring streets, and I immediately made sail in chase. He at once recognised me, gave me a cordial shake of the hand, and enquired how he could serve me. I produced two letters which I had brought for him, but which had been forgotten in the bustle of the preceding day ; they were introductory, and although sealed, I



had some reason to conjecture that my friend, Mr Perperpot Wagtail, had done me much more than justice. Campana, with great kindness, immediately invited me to his house. "We foreigners," said he, "don't keep your hours; I am just going home to breakfast." It was past eleven in the forenoon. I was about excusing myself on the plea of having already breakfasted, when he silenced me. "Why, I guessed as much, Mr Lieutenant, but then you have not lunched; so you can call it lunch, you know, if it will ease your conscience." There was no saying nay to all this civility, so we stumped along the burning streets, through a mile of houses, large massive buildings, but very different in externals from the gay domiciles of Kingston. Aaron Bang afterwards used to say that they looked more like prisons than dwelling-houses, and he was not in this very much out. Most of them were built of brick and plastered over, with large windows, in front of each of which, like the houses in the south of Spain, there was erected a large heavy wooden balcony, projecting far enough from the wall to allow a Spanish chair, such as I have already described, to be placed in it. The front of these verandahs was closed in with a row of heavy balustrades at the bottom, of a variety of shapes, and by clumsy carved woodwork above, which effectually prevented you from seeing into the interior. The whole had a Moorish air, and in the upper part of the town there was a Sabbath-like stillness prevailing, which was only broken now and then by the tinkle of a guitar from one of the aforesaid verandahs, or by the rattling of a crazy *volante*, a sort of covered gig, drawn by a broken-kneed and broken-winded mule, with a kiln-dried old Spaniard or doña in it.

The lower part of the town had been busy enough,



and the stir and hum of it rendered the quietude of the upper part of it more striking.

A shovel-hatted friar now suddenly accosted us.

"*Señor Campana—ese pobre familia de Cangrejo ! Lastima ! Lastima !*"

"*Cangrejo—Cangrejo !*" muttered I ; " why, it is the very name attached to the miniature."

Campana turned to the priest, and they conversed earnestly together for some moments, when he left him, and we again held on our way. I could not help asking him what family that was, whose situation the "*padre*" seemed so feelingly to bemoan.

" Never mind," said he, " never mind ; they were a proud family once, but that is all over now—come along."

" But," said I, " I have a very peculiar cause of interest with regard to this family. You are aware, of course, of the trial and execution of the pirates in Kingston, the most conspicuous of whom was a young man called Federico Cangrejo, from whom"—

" Mr Cringle," said he, solemnly, " at a fitting time I will hear you regarding that matter ; at present I entreat you will not press it."

Good manners would not allow me to push it farther, and we trudged along together, until we arrived at Don Ricardo Campana's door. It was a large brick building, plastered over as already described, and whitewashed. There was a projecting stair in front, with a flight of steps to the right and left, with a parapet wall towards the street. There were two large windows, with the wooden verandah or lattice already described, on the first floor, and on the second a range of smaller windows, of the same kind. What answered to our ground floor was used as a warehouse, and filled with dry goods, sugar, coffee,

hides, and a vast variety of miscellaneous articles. We ascended the stairs, and entered a lofty room, cool and dark, and paved with large diamond-shaped bricks, and every way desirable for a West India lounge, all to the furniture, which was meagre enough; three or four chairs, a worm-eaten old leathern sofa, and a large clumsy hard-wood table in the midst.

There were several children playing about, little sallow devils, although, I dare say, they could all of them have been furnished with certificates of white parentage, upon whom one or two negro women were hovering in attendance beyond a large folding door that fronted the entrance.

When we entered, the eldest of the children, a little girl of about eight years old, was sitting in the doorway, playing with a small blue toy that I could make nothing of, until on a nearer inspection I found it to be a live land-crab, which the little lady had manacled with a thread by the foot, the thread being fastened to a nail driven into a seam of the floor.

As an article of food, I was already familiar with this creature; it was in every respect like a sea-crab, only smaller, the body being at the widest not above three inches across the back. It fed without any apparent fear, and while it pattered over the tiled floor, with its hard claws, it would now and then stop and seize a crumb of bread in its forceps, and feed itself like a little monkey. By the time I had exchanged a few words with the little lady, the large door that opened into the hall on the right hand moved, and mine hostess made her appearance; a small woman, dressed in a black gown, very laxly fitted. She was the very converse of our old ship, she never *missed stays*, although I did cruelly.

"This is my friend, Lieutenant Cringle," said mine host.

“ *A las pies de usted, señora,*” responded your humble servant.

“ I am very glad to see you,” said the lady ; “ but breakfast is ready ; welcome, sir, welcome.”

The food was not amiss, the coffee decidedly good, and the chocolate, wherein, if you had planted a tea-spoon, it would have stood upright, was excellent. When we had done with substantials, *dulce*, that is the fruit of the guava preserved, in small wooden boxes, (like drums of figs,) after being made into a kind of jam, was placed on the table, and mine host and his spouse had eaten a bushel of it a-piece, and drank a gallon of that most heathenish beverage, cold clear water, before the repast was considered ended. After a hearty meal and a pint of claret, I felt rather inclined to sit still, and expatiate for an hour or so, but Campana roused me, and asked whether or not I felt inclined to go and look at the town. I had no apology, and although I would much rather have sat still, I rose to accompany him, when in walked Captain Transom and Mr Bang. They were also kindly received by Don Ricardo.

“ Glad of the honour of this visit,” said he in French, with a slight *lift* of the corner of his mouth ; “ I hope neither *you* nor your boat’s-crew took any harm after the *heat* of yesterday.”

Transom laughed.

“ Why, you did beat us very neatly, Don Ricardo. Pray, where got you that canoe ? But a lady—Mrs Campana, I presume ?—Have the goodness to introduce me.”

The skipper was presented in due form, the lady receiving him without the least *mauvaise honte*, which, after all, I believe to be indigenous to our island. Aaron was next introduced, who, as he spoke no lingo, *as I knows of*, to borrow Timotheus Taitackle’s phraseology, but English, was rather posed in the interview.

"I say, Tom, tell her I wish she may live a thousand years. Ah, so, that will do."

Madama made her *congé*, and hoped "*El señor tomaria un asiento.*"

"*Mucho, mucho,*" sung out Bang, who meant by that that he was *much* obliged.

At length Don Ricardo came to our aid. He had arranged a party into the country for next morning, and invited us all to come back to a *tertulia* in the evening, and to take beds in his house, he undertaking to provide *bestias* to carry us.

We therefore strolled out, a good deal puzzled what to make of ourselves until the evening, when we fell in with one of the captains of the English ships then loading, who told us that there was a sort of hotel a little way down the street, where we might dine at two o'clock at the *table d'hôte*. It was as yet only twelve, so we stumbled into this said hotel to reconnoitre, and a sorry affair it was. The public room was fitted with rough wooden tables, at which Spaniards, Americans, and Englishmen, sat and smoked, and drank sangaree, hot punch, or cold grog, as best suited them, and committed a vast variety of miscellaneous abominations during their potations. We were about giving up all thoughts of the place, and had turned to go to the door, when in popped our friend Don Ricardo. He saw we were somewhat abroad.

"Gentlemen," said he, "if I may ask, have you any engagement to dinner?"

"No, we have none."

"Well, then, will you do me the honour of partaking of my family fare, at three o'clock? I did not venture to invite you before, because I knew you had other let-

ters to deliver, and I wished to leave you masters of your own time." We gladly accepted his kind offer; he had made his bow, and was cruising amongst the smokers, and punch-drinkers, where the blue-coated masters of the English merchantmen and American skippers, were hobbing and nobbing with the gingham-coated Dons, for the whole Spanish part of the community were figged out in Glasgow and Paisley ginghams; when the priest, who had attracted our attention in the morning, came up to him, and drew him aside. They talked earnestly together, the *clerigo*, every now and then, indicating by significant nods and glances towards us, that we formed the burden of his song, whatever that might be. Campana seemed exceedingly unwilling to communicate the message, which we guessed he had been entreated to carry to us, and made one or two attempts to shove the friar in *propria persona* towards us, that he might himself tell his own story. At length they advanced together to where we stood, when he addressed me.

"You must pardon me, lieutenant; but as the proverb hath it, 'strange countries, strange manners;' my friend here, Padre Carera, brings a message from El Señor Picador Cangrejo, one of our magnates, that he will consider it an especial favour if you will call on him, either this forenoon or to-morrow."

"Why, *who is* this Cangrejo, Don Ricardo? if he be not the father of the poor fellow I mentioned, there must be some mystery about him."

"No mystery," chimed in the monk; "no mystery, God help us, but *mucha, mucha miseria, hijo mio*; much misery, sir, and more impending, and none to help save only"—He did not finish the sentence, but taking off his shovel-hat, and showing his finely turned bald head,

he looked up to heaven, and crossed himself, the tears trickling down his wrinkled cheeks. "But," continued he, "you will come, Mr Cringle?"

"Certainly," said I, "to-morrow I will call, if my friend Don Ricardo will be my guide." This being fixed, we strolled about until dinner-time, friend Aaron making his remarks regarding the people and their domiciles with great *naïveté*.

"Strange now, Tom, I had expected to see little else amongst the slave population here than misery and starvation; whereas, so far as I can observe, they are all deucedly well cared for, and fat, and contented; and from the enquiries I was making amongst the captains of the merchantmen" —— ("Masters," interjected Captain Transom, "*Master* of a merchantman, *Captain* of a man-of-war"——) "Well, captains of merchantmen,—masters, I mean,—I find that the people whom they employ are generally free; and, farther, that the slaves are not more than three to one free person, yet they export a great deal of produce, Captain Transom—must keep my eyes about me." And so he did, as will be seen by and by. But the dinner-hour drew near, and we repaired to Don Ricardo's, where we found a party of eight assembled, and our appearance was the signal for the repast being ordered in. It was laid out in the entrance-hall. The table was of massive mahogany, the chairs of the same material, with stuffed bottoms, covered with a dingy-coloured morocco, which might have been red *once*. But devil a dish of any kind was on the snow-white tablecloth when we sat down, and our situations, or the places we were expected to fill at the board, were only indicated by a large knife and silver fork and spoon laid down for each person. The company consisted of Don Ricardo Campana, la Señora Campana, and a brother of hers, two



dark young men, who were Don Ricardo's clerks, and three young women, ladies, or *señoras*, as I ought to have called them, who were sitting so far back into the shade, at the dark end of the room, when we entered, that I could not tell what they were. Our hostess was, although a little woman, a good-looking dark Spaniard, not very polished, but very kind; and seeing that our friend Aaron was the most helpless amongst us, she took him under her especial care, and made many a civil speech to him, although her husband did not fail to advertise her, that he understood not one word of Spanish, that is, of all she was saying to him. However, he replied to her kindnesses by his never-failing exclamation of "*mucho, mucho*," and they appeared to be getting on extremely well. "Bring dinner," quoth Don Ricardo, "*trae la comida*;" and four black female domestics entered, the first with a large dish of pillaffe, or fowls smothered in rice and onions; the second with a nondescript melange, flesh, fish, and fowl apparently, strongly flavoured with garlic; the third bore a dish of jerked beef, cut into long shreds, and swimming in *sebo* or lard; and the fourth bore a large dish full of that indescribable thing known by those who read Don Quixote, as an *olla podrida*. The sable handmaidens began to circulate round the table, and every one helped himself to the dish that he most fancied. At length they placed them on the board, and brought massive silver salvers, with snow-white bread, twisted into strands in the baking, like junks of a cable; and water jars, and yams nicely roasted and wrapped in plantain leaves. These were in like manner handed round, and then deposited on the table, and the domestics vanished.

We all got on cheerily enough, and both the captain and myself were finishing off with the *olla podrida*, with

which, it so happened, we were familiar, and friend Bang, taking the time from us, took heart of grace and straightway followed our example. There was a pause—rather an irksome one from its continuance, so much so indeed, that knocking off from my more immediate business of gorging the aforesaid *olla podrida*, I looked up, and as it so happened, by accident towards our friend Bang—and there he was, munching and screwing up his energies to swallow a large mouthful of the mixture, against which his stomach appeared to rebel. “Smollet’s feast after the manner of the ancients,” whispered Transom. At length he made a vigorous effort and straightway sung out—“*L’eau de vie*, Don Ricardibus—some brandy, *mon ami*—for the love of all the respectable saints in the calendar.”

Mine host laughed, but the females were most confoundedly posed. The younger ones ran for aromatic salts, while the lady of the house fetched some very peculiar distilled waters. She, in her kindness, filled a glass and helped Bang, but the instant he perceived the flavour, he thrust it away.

“Anniseed—damn anniseed—no, no—obliged—*mucho*, *mucho*—but brandy *plaino*, that is simple of itself, if you please—that’s it—Lord love you, my dear madam—may you live a thousand years though.”

The pure brandy was administered, and once more the dark beauties reappeared, the first carrying a bottle of vin-de-grave, the second one of vinotinto, or claret, and the third one of *l’eau de vie*, for Aaron’s peculiar use. These were placed before the landlord, who helped himself to half a pint of claret, which he poured into a large tumbler, and then putting a drop or two of water into it, tasted it, and sent it to his wife. In like manner he gave a smaller quantity to each of the other señoras, when the

whole female part of the family drank our healths in a volley. But all this time the devil a thing drinkable was there before we males, but goblets of pure cold water. Bang's "*mucho, mucho*," even failed him, for he had only in his modesty got a thimbleful of brandy to qualify the *olla podrida*. However, in a twinkling a beautiful long-necked bottle of claret was planted at each of our right hands, and of course we lost no time in returning the unlooked-for civility of the ladies. Until this moment I had not got a proper glimpse of the three Virgins of the Sun, who were seated at table with us. They were very pretty Moorish-looking girls, as like as peas, dark hair, black eyes, clear colourless olive complexion, and no stays; but young and elastic as their figures were, this was no disadvantage. They were all three dressed in black silk petticoats, over a sort of cambric chemise, with large frills hanging down at the bosom, but gown, properly so called, they had none, their arms being unencumbered with any clothing heavier than a shoulder strap. The eldest was a fine full young woman of about nineteen; the second was more tall and stately, but slighter; and the youngest was—oh, she was an angel of light—such hair, such eyes, and such a mouth; then her neck and bosom—

“ Oh, my Norah's gown for me,  
To rise and fall as nature pleases,”

when the wearer *is*, as in the present case she *was*, young and beautiful. They all wore a long plain white gauze strap, like a broad ribbon, (little Reefpoint afterwards said they wore boat pennants at their mastheads,) I don't know what Madam Maradan Carson would call it, in their hair, which fell down from amongst the braids nearly to their heels, and then they replied in their magnificent language, when casually addressed during dinner, with so

much *naïveté*. We, the males of the party, had drank little or nothing—a bottle of claret or so a-piece—and a dram of brandy, to qualify a little vin-de-grave that we had flirted with during dinner, when our landlord rose, along with his brother-in-law, wished us a good afternoon, and departed to his counting-house, saying he would be back by dark, leaving the captain and I, and friend Bang, to amuse the ladies the best way we could, as the clerks had taken wing along with their master. Don Ricardo's departure seemed to be the signal for all hands breaking loose, and a regular romping match took place, the girls producing their guitars, and we were all mighty frolicsome and happy, when a couple of *padres* from the convent of La Merced, in their white flannel gowns, black girdles, and shaven crowns, suddenly entered the hall. We, the foreign part of the society, calculated on being pulled up by the *clerigos*, but deuce a bit; on the contrary, the young females clustered round them, laughing and joking, while the Señora Campana presented them with goblets of claret, in which they drank our healths, once and again, and before long they were gamboling about, all shaven and shorn, like a couple of three-year-olds. Bang had a large share of their assiduity, and to see him waltzing with a fine active, and what I fancy to be a rarity, a clean-looking priest, with his ever recurring "*mucho, mucho*," was rather entertaining.

The director of the post-office, and a gentleman who was called the "*Corregidor de Tabaco*," literally the "corrector of tobacco," dropped in about this time, and one or two ladies, relatives of Mrs Campana, and Don Ricardo returning soon after, we had sweetmeats and liqueurs, and coffee, and chocolate, and a game at monte, and maco, and were, in fact, very happy. But the happiest day, as well as the most miserable, must have an end, and the

merry party dropped off, one after another, until we were left all alone with our host's family. Madama soon after took her departure, wishing us a good-night. She had no sooner gone, than Bang began to shoot out his horns a bit. "I say, Tom, ask the Don to let us have a drop of something hot, will you, a tumbler of hot brandy and water after the waltzing, eh? I don't see the bedroom candles yet." Nor would he, if we had sat there till doomsday. Campana seemed to have understood Bang, the brandy was immediately forthcoming, and we drew in to the table to enjoy ourselves, Bang waxing talkative. "Now what odd names,—why, what a strange office it must be for his Majesty of Spain to employ at every port a *corrector of tobacco*; that his liege subjects may not be imposed on, I suppose—what capital cigars this same *corrector* must have, eh?"

I suppose it is scarcely necessary to mention, that throughout all the Spanish American possessions, tobacco is a royal monopoly, and that the officer above alluded to is the functionary who has the management of it. Don Ricardo, hearing something about cigars, took the hint, and immediately produced a straw case from his pocket, and handed it to Bang.

"*Mucho, mucho,*" quoth Bang; "capital, real Havannah."

So now, since we had all gotten fairly into the clouds, there was no saying how long we should have remained in the seventh heaven—much would have depended upon the continuance of the supply of brandy—but two female slaves presently made their appearance, each carrying a *quatre*. I believe I have already described this easily rigged couch somewhere; it is a hard-wood frame, like what supports the loose top of a laundry table, with canvass stretched over the top of it, but in such a manner

that it can be folded up flat, and laid against the wall when not in use, while a bed can be immediately constructed by simply opening it and stretching the canvass. The handmaidens accordingly set to work to arrange two beds, or *quatre*s, one on each side of the table where we were sitting, while Bang sat eyeing them askance, in a kind of wonderment as to the object of the preparations, which were by no means new either to the captain or me, who, looking on them as matters of course, continued in close confabulation with Don Ricardo during the operations.

"I say, Tom," at length quoth Bang, "are you to be laid out on one of these outlandish pieces of machinery—eh?"

"Why, I suppose so; and comfortable enough beds they are, I can assure you."

"Don't fancy them much, however," said Bang; "rather flimsy the framework."

The servants now very unceremoniously, no leave asked, began to clear away all the glasses and tumblers on the table.

"Hillo!" said the skipper, casting an enquiring glance at Campana, who, however, did not return it, but, as a matter of course apparently, rose, and taking a chair to the other end of the room, close by the door of an apartment which opened from it, began in cold blood to unlace and disburden himself of all his apparel, even unto his shirt.

This surprised us all a good deal, but our wonderment was lost on the Don, who got up from his seat, and in his linen garment, which was deucedly laconic, made his formal bow, wished us good-night, and vanished through the door. By this, the ebony ladies had cleared the table



of the crystal, and had capped it with a yellow leather mattrass, with pillows of the same, both embossed with large tufts of red silk; on this they placed *one* sheet, and leaving a silver apparatus at the head, they disappeared—“*Buenas noches, señores—las camas estan listas.*”

Bang had been unable to speak from excess of astonishment; but the skipper and I, finding there was no help for it, had followed Campana's example, and kept pace with him in our *peeling*, so that by the time he disappeared, we were ready to topple into our *quattres*, which we accordingly did, and by this time we were both at full length, with our heads cased each in one of Don Ricardo's silk nightcaps, contemplating Bang's appearance, as he sat in disconsolate mood in his chair at the head of the table, with the fag-end of a cigar in the corner of his cheek.

“Now, Bang,” said Transom, “turn in, and let us have a snooze, will ye?”

Bang did not seem to like it much.

“Zounds, Transom, did you ever hear of a gentleman being put to bed on a table? Why, it must be a quizz. Only fancy me dished out and served up like a great calipi in the shell! However, here goes—But surely this is in sorry taste; we had our chocolate a couple of hours ago—capital it was, by the by—in vulgar Staffordshire china, and now they give us silver”——

“Be decent, Bang,” cut in the skipper, who was by this time more than half asleep. “Be decent, and go to bed—that's a good fellow.”

“Ah, well”—Aaron undressed himself, and lay down; and there he was laid out, with a candle on each side of his head, his red face surmounted by a redder handkerchief tied round his head, sticking out above the white

sheet ; and supported by Captain Transom and myself, one on each side. All was now quiet. I got up and put out the candles, and as I fell asleep, I could hear Aaron laughing to himself—"Dished, and served up, deuced like Saint Barts. I was intended for a doctor, Tom, you must know. I hope the Don is not a medical amateur ; I trust he won't have a touch at me before morning. Rum *subject* I should make—he ! he !" All was silent for some time.

"Hillo—what is that ?" said Aaron again, as if suddenly aroused from his slumbers—"I say, none of your fun, Transom."

A large bat was *flaffing* about, and I could hear him occasionally *whir* near our faces.

"Oh, a bat—hate bats—how the skipper snores ! I hope there be no resurrection-men in St Jago, or I shall be stolen away to a certainty before morning. How should I look as a skeleton in a glass-case, eh ?"

I heard no more, until, it might be, about midnight, when I was awakened, and frightened out of my wits, by Bang rolling *off* the table *on* to my *quatre*, which he broke in his fall, and then we both rolled over and over on the floor.

"Murder !" roared Bang. "I am bewitched and be-devilled. Murder ! a scorpion has dropped from the roof into my mouth, and stung me on the nose. Murder ! Tom—Tom Cringle—Captain—Transom, my dear fellows, awake and send for the doctor. Oh my wig—oh dear—oh dear"——

At this uproar I could hear Don Ricardo striking a light, and presently he appeared with a candle in his hand, more than half naked, with la señora peering through the half-opened door behind him.

“*Ave Maria purissima*—what is the matter? Where is *el Señor Bang*?”

“*Mucho, mucho*,” shouted Bang from below the table. “Send for a doctoribus, Señor Richardum. I am dead and t’other thing—help!—help!”

“*Dios guarda usted*,” again ejaculated Campana. “What has befallen him?” addressing the skipper, who was by this time on his head’s antipodes in bed, rubbing his eyes, and in great amazement.

“Tell him, my dear Transom, that a scorpion fell from the roof, and stung me on the nose.”

“What says he?” enquired the Spaniard.

Poor Transom’s intellect was at this time none of the clearest, being more than half asleep, and not quite so sober as a hermit is wont to be; besides, he must needs speak Spanish, of which he was by no means master, which led to a very comical blunder. *Alacran*, in Spanish, means scorpion, and *Cayman*, an alligator, not very similar in sound certainly, but the *termination* being the same, he selected in the hurry the wrong phrase.

“He says,” replied Transom in bad Spanish, “that he has swallowed an alligator, or something of that sort, sir.” Then a loud yawn.

“Swallowed a what?” rejoined Campana, greatly astonished.

“No, no,” snorted the captain—“I am wrong—he says he has been *stung* by an alligator.”

“Stung by an alligator!—impossible.”

“Why, then,” persisted the skipper, “if he be not stung by an alligator, or if he has not *really* swallowed one, at all events an alligator has either stung or swallowed him—so make the most of it, Don Ricardo.”

“Why this is absurd, with all submission,” continued

Campana; "how the deuce could he swallow an alligator, or an alligator get into my house to annoy him?"

"D—n it," said Transom, half tipsy and very sleepy, "that's his look out. You are very unreasonable, Don Ricardo; all that is the affair of friend Bang and the alligator; my purpose is solely to convey his meaning *faithfully*"—a loud snore.

"Oh," said Campana, laughing, "I see, I see; I left your friend *sobre mesa*, [on the table,] but now I see he is *sub rosa*."

"Help, good people, help!" roared Bang—"help, or my nose will reach from this to the Moro Castle—Help!"

We got him out, and were I to live a thousand years, which would be a tolerably good spell, I don't think I could forget his appearance. His nose, usually the smallest article of the kind that I ever saw, was now swollen as large as my fist, and as purple as a mulberry—the distension of the skin, from the venomous sting of the reptile—for stung he *had been* by a scorpion—made it semi-transparent, so that it looked like a large *blob* of currant jelly hung on a peg in the middle of his face, or a gigantic leech, gorged with blood, giving his visage the semblance of some grotesque old-fashioned dial, with a fantastic gnomon.

"A poultice—a poultice—a poultice, good people, or I shall presently be all nose together,"—and a poultice was promptly manufactured from mashed pumpkin, and he was put to bed, with his face covered up with it, as if an Italian artist had been taking a cast of his beauties in plaster of Paris.

In the application of this said poultice, however, we had nearly extinguished poor Aaron amongst us, by suffocating him outright; for the skipper, who was the operating surgeon in the first instance, with me for his

mate, clapped a whole ladleful over his mouth and nose, which, besides being scalding hot, sealed those orifices effectually, and indeed about a couple of tablespoonfuls had actually been forced down his gullet, notwithstanding his struggles, and exclamations of "Pumpkin—bad—softened with castor oil—d—n it, skipper, you'll choke me"—spurt—sputter—sputter—"choke me, man."

"*Cuidado*," said Don Ricardo; "let me manage"—and he got a small tube of wild cane, which he stuck into Bang's mouth, through a hole in the poultice-cloth, and set a negro servant to watch that it did not sink into his gullet, as he fell asleep, and with instructions to take the poultice off whenever the pain abated; and there he lay on his back, whistling through this artificial beak, like a sick snipe.

At length, however, all hands of us seemed to have fallen asleep, but towards the dawning I was awakened by repeated bursts of suppressed laughter, and upon looking in the direction from whence the sounds proceeded, I was surprised beyond all measure to observe Transom in a corner of the room in his trowsers and shirt, squatted like a tailor on his hams, with one of the sable damsels on her knees beside him holding a candle, while his Majesty's Post Captain was plying his needle in a style and with a dexterity that would have charmed our friend Stultze exceedingly, and every now and then bending double over his work, and swinging his body backwards and forwards with the water welling from his eyes, laughing all the while like to choke himself. As for his bronze candlestick, I thought she would have expired on the spot, with her white teeth glancing like ivory, and the tears running down her cheeks, as she every now and then clapped a handkerchief on her mouth to smother the uncontrollable uproariousness of her mirth.

"Why, captain, what spree is this?" said I.

"Never you mind, but come here. I say, Mr Cringle, do you see him piping away there"—and there he was, sure enough, still gurgling through the wild cane—with his black guardian, whose province it was to have removed the poultice, sound asleep, snoring in the huge chair at Bang's head, wherein he had established himself, while the candle at his patient's cheek was flickering in the socket.

My superior was evidently bent on wickedness.

"Get up and put on your trowsers, man."

I did so.

"Now wait a bit till I cooper him—Here, my darling"—to the sable virgin who was now on the *qui vive*, bustling about—"here," said the captain, sticking out a leg of Bang's trowsers, "hold you there, my dear"—

She happened to be a native of Haiti, and comprehended his French.

—"Now hold *you* that, Mr Cringle."

I took hold of the other leg, and held it in a fitting position, while Transom deliberately sewed them both up.

"Now for the coat sleeves"—

We sealed them in a similar manner.

"So—now for his shirt."

We sewed up the stem, and then the stern, converting it into an outlandish-looking pillow-case, and finally both sleeves; and last of all, we got two live land-crabs from the servants, by dint of persuasion and a little *plata*, and clapped one into each stocking foot.

We then dressed ourselves, and when all was ready, we got a piece of tape for a lanyard, and made one end fast to the handle of a large earthen water-jar, full to the brim, which we placed on Bang's pillow, and passed the other end round the neck of the sleeping negro.



"Now get you to bed," said the captain to the dingy handmaiden, "and stand by to be off, Mr Cringle."

He stepped to Don Ricardo's bedroom door, and tapped loudly.

"Hillo!" quoth the Don. On this hint, like men springing a mine, the last who leave the sap, we sprang into the street, when the skipper turned, and taking aim with a large custard apple which he had armed himself with, (I have formerly described this fruit as resembling a russet bag of cold pudding,) he let fly. Spin flew the apple—bash on the blackamoor's obtuse snout. He started back, and in his terror and astonishment threw a *somersault* over the back of his chair—gush poured the water—smash fell the pipkin—"murder" roared Bang, dashing off the poultice-cast, with such fury that it lighted in the street—and away we raced at the top of our speed.

We ran as fast as our legs could carry us for two hundred yards, and then turning, walked deliberately home again, as if we had been out taking a walk in the cool morning air.

As we approached, we heard the yells of a negro, and Bang high in oath.

"You black rascal, nothing must serve your turn but practising your John Canoe tricks upon a gentleman—take that, you villain, as a small recompense for floating me out of my bed—or rather off the table," and the ludicrousness of his couch seemed to come over the worthy fellow once more, and he laughed loud and long—"Poor devil, I hope I have not hurt you? here, Quashi, there's a pistole, go buy a plaster for your broken pate."

By this we had returned in front of the house, and as we ascended the front stairs, we again heard a loud racketing within; but blackie's voice was now wanting

in the row, wherein the Spaniard and our friend appeared to be the *dramatis personæ*—and sure enough there was Don Ricardo and Bang at it, tooth and nail.

“Allow me to assist you,” quoth the Don.

“Oh no—*mucho—mucho*,” quoth Bang, who was spinning round and round in his shirt on one leg, trying to thrust his foot into his trowsers; but the garment was impervious; and after emulating Noblet in a pirouette, he sat down in despair. We appeared—“Ah, Transom, glad to see you—some evil spirit has bewitched me, I believe—overnight I was stung to death by a scorpion—half an hour ago I was deluged by an invisible spirit—and just now when I got up, and began to pull on my stockings, Lord! a land-crab was in the toe part, and see how he has scarified me”—forking up his peg—“I then tried my trowsers,” he continued in a most doleful tone—“and lo! the legs are sealed. And look at my face, saw you ever such an unfortunate? But the devil take you, Transom, I see through your tricks now, and will pay you off for this yet, take my word for it.”

The truth is, that our amigo Aaron had gotten an awful fright on his first awakening after his cold bath, for he had given the poor black fellow an ugly blow upon the face, before he had gathered his senses well about him, and the next moment seeing the blood streaming from his nose, and mixing with the custard-like pulp of the fruit with which his face was plastered, he took it into his noddle that he had knocked the man's brains out. However, we righted the worthy fellow the best way we could, and shortly afterwards coffee was brought, and Bang having got himself shaven and dressed, began to forget all his botherations. But before we left the house, madama, Don Ricardo's better-half, insisted on anointing his nose with some mixture famous for reptile-bites.

His natural good-breeding made him submit to the application, which was neither more nor less than an infusion of indigo and ginger, with which the worthy lady painted our friend's face and muzzle in a most ludicrous manner—it was *heads and tails* between him and an ancient Briton. Reefpoint at this moment appeared at the door with a letter from the merchant captains, which had been sent down to the corvette, regarding the time of sailing, and acquainting us when they would be ready. While Captain Transom was perusing it, Bang was practising Spanish at the expense of Don Ricardo, whom he had boxed into a corner; but all his Spanish seemed to be scraps of schoolboy Latin, and I noticed that Campana had the greatest difficulty in keeping his countenance. At length Don Ricardo approached us—"Gentlemen, I have laid out a little plan for the day; it is my wife's saint's day, and a holyday in the family, so we propose going to a coffee property of mine about ten miles from Santiago, and staying till morning—What say you?"

I chimed in—"I fear, sir, that I shall be unable to accompany you, even if Captain Transom should be good enough to give me leave, as I have an errand to do for that unhappy young fellow that we spoke about last evening—some trinkets which I promised to deliver; here they are"—and I produced the miniature and crucifix.

Campana winced—"Unpleasant, certainly, lieutenant," said he.

"I know it will be so myself, but I have *promised*"——

"Then far be it from me to induce you to break your promise," said the worthy man. "My son," said he, gravely, "the friar you saw yesterday is confessor to Don Picador Cangrejo's family; his reason for asking to obtain an interview with you was from its being known that you were active in capturing the unfortunate men with

whom young Federico Cangrejo, his only son, was leagued. Oh that poor boy! Had you known him, gentlemen, as I knew him, poor, poor Federico!"

"He was an awful villain, however, you must allow," said the captain.

"Granted in the fullest sense, my dear sir," rejoined Campana; "but we are all frail, erring creatures, and he was hardly dealt by. He is now gone to his heavy account, and I may as well tell you the poor boy's sad story at once. Had you but seen him in his prattling infancy, in his sunny boyhood!"

"He was the only son of a rich old father, an honest but worldly man, and of a most peevish, irascible temper. Poor Federico, and his sister Francisca, his only sister, were often cruelly used; and his orphan cousin, my sweet god-daughter, Maria Olivera, their playmate, was, if any thing, more harshly treated; for although his mother was and is a most excellent woman, and always stood between them and the old man's ill temper, yet at the time I speak of she had returned to Spain, where a long period of ill health detained her for upwards of three years. Federico by this time was nineteen years of age, tall, handsome, and accomplished beyond all the youth of his rank and time of life in Cuba: But you have seen him, gentlemen—in his extremity, it is true—yet, fallen as he was, I mistake if you thought him a *common* man. For good, or for evil, my heart told me he would be conspicuous, and I was, alas the day! too true a prophet. His attachment to his cousin, who, on the death of her mother, had become an inmate of Don Picador's house, had been evident to all but the purblind old man for a long time; and when he did discover it, he imperatively forbade all intercourse between them, as, forsooth, he had projected a richer match for him, and shut Maria up in a corner of

his large mansion. Federico, haughty and proud, could not stomach this. He ceased to reside at his father's estate, which had been confided to his management, and began to frequent the billiard-table, and monte-tables, and taverns, and in a thousand ways gave, from less to more, such unendurable offence, that his father at length shut his door against him, and turned him, with twenty doubloons in his pocket, into the street.

“ Friends interceded, for the feud soon became public, and, amongst others, I essayed to heal it ; and with the fond, although passionate father, I easily succeeded ; but how true it is, that ‘ evil communication corrupts good manners ! ’ I found Federico by this time linked in bands of steel with a *junto* of desperadoes, whose calling was any thing but equivocal, and implacable to a degree, that, knowing him as I had known him, I had believed impossible. But, alas, the human heart is indeed desperately wicked. I struggled long with the excellent Father Carera to bring about a reconciliation, and thought we had succeeded, as Federico was induced to return to his father's house once more, and for many days and weeks we all flattered ourselves that he had reformed ; until one morning, about four months ago, he was discovered coming out of his cousin's room about the dawning by his father, who immediately charged him with seducing his ward. High words ensued. Poor Maria rushed out and threw herself at her uncle's feet. The old man, in a transport of fury, kicked her on the face as she lay prostrate ; whereupon, God help me, he was felled to the earth by his own flesh, and bone, and blood—by his abandoned son.

‘ What rein can hold licentious wickedness,  
When down the hill he holds his fierce career ? ’

“ The rest is soon told ;—he joined the pirate vessels at

Puerto Escondido, and, from his daring and reckless intrepidity, soon rose to command amongst them, and was proceeding in his infernal career, when the God whom he had so fearfully defied, at length sent him to expiate his crimes on the scaffold."

"But the priest"—said I, much excited.

"True," continued Don Ricardo, "Padre Carera brought a joint message from his poor mother and sister, and—and, oh my darling god-child, my heart-dear Maria!"—And the kind old man wept bitterly. I was greatly moved.

"Why, Mr Cringle," said Transom, "if you *have* promised to deliver the trinkets in *propria persona*, there's an end, *take* leave—nothing doing down yonder—send Taitackle for clothes. Mr Reefpoint, go to the boat and send up Taitackle; so go you must to these unfortunates, and we shall then start on our cruise to the coffee estate, with our worthy host."

"Why," said Campana; "the family are in the country; they live about four miles from Santiago, on the very road to my property, and we shall call on our way; but I don't much admire these interviews—there will be a *scene* I fear"—

"Not on my part," said I; "but *call* I must, for I solemnly promised"—and presented the miniature to Don Ricardo.

Campana looked at it. It was exquisitely finished, and represented a most beautiful girl, a dark, large-eyed, sparkling, Spanish beauty. "Oh, my dear, dear child," murmured Don Ricardo, "how like this *was* to what you *were*; how changed you are *now* from what it *is*—alas! alas! But come, gentlemen, my wife is ready, and my two nieces,"—the pretty girls who were of our party the previous evening—"and here are the horses."



At this moment the little midshipman, Master Reefpoint, a great favourite of mine, by the by, reappeared, with Tiltackle behind him, carrying my bundle. I was regularly caught, as the clothes, on the *chance* of a lark, had been brought from the ship, although stowed out of sight under the stern-sheets of the boat.

“Here are your clothes, Mr Cringle,” quoth *middy*.

“Devil confound your civility,” internally murmured I.

The captain twigged, and smiled. Upon which little Reefy stole up to me—“Lord, Mr Cringle, could you but get *me* leave to go, it would be such a’”——

“Hold your tongue, boy, how can I”——

Transom struck in—“Master Reefpoint, I see what you are driving at; but how shall the Firebrand be taken care of when *you* are away, eh? besides, *you* have no clothes, and we shall be away a couple of days, most probably.”

“Oh, yes, sir, I have clothes; I have a hair-brush and a tooth-brush, and two shirt-collars, in my waistcoat pocket.”

“Very well, can we venture to lumber our kind friends with this giant, Mr Cringle, and can we really leave the ship without him?” Little Reefy was now all alive. “Tiltackle, go on board—say we shall be back to dinner the day after to-morrow,” said the captain.

We now made ready for the start, and certainly the cavalcade was rather a remarkable one. First, there was an old lumbering family *volante*, a sort of gig, with four posts or uprights supporting a canopy covered with leather, and with a high dash-iron or splash-board in front. There were curtains depending from this canopy, which on occasion could be let down, so as to cover in the sides and front. The whole was of the most clumsy work-

manship that can be imagined, and hung by untanned leather straps in a square wooden frame, from the front of which again protruded two shafts, straight as Corinthian pillars, and equally substantial, embracing an uncommonly fine mule, one of the largest and handsomest of the species which I had seen. The harnessing partook of the same kind of unwieldy strength and solidity, and was richly embossed with silver and dirt. Astride on this *mulo* sat a household negro, with a huge thong of bullock's hide in one hand, and the reins in the other. In this *voiture* were ensconced La Señora Campana, a portly concern, as already mentioned, two of her bright black-eyed laughing nieces, and Master Reefpoint, invisible as he lay smothered amongst the ladies, all to his little glazed cocked hat, and jabbering away in a most unintelligible fashion, so far as the young ladies, and eke the old one, were concerned. However, they appeared all mightily tickled by little Reefy, either mentally or physically, for off they trundled, laughing and *skirling* loud above the noise and creaking of the *volante*. Then came three small, ambling, stoutish long-tailed ponies, the biggest not above fourteen hands high; these were the barbs intended for mine host, the skipper, and myself, caparisoned with high demipique old-fashioned Spanish saddles, mounted with silver stirrups, and clumsy bridles, with a ton of rusty iron in each poor brute's mouth for a bit, and curbs like a piece of our chain cable, all very rich, and, as before mentioned with regard to the *volante*, far from clean. Their pace was a fast run, a compound of walk, trot, and canter, or rather of a trot and a canter, the latter broken down and frittered away through the instrumentality of a ferocious Mameluke bit, but as easy as an arm-chair; and this was, I speak it feelingly, a great convenience, as a sailor is not a Centaur, not altogether of a

piece with his horse, as it were ; yet both Captain Transom and myself were rather goodish horsemen for nauticals, although rather apt to go over the bows upon broaching-to suddenly. Don Ricardo's costume would have been thought a little out of the way in Leicestershire ; most people put on their boots " when they do a riding go," but he chose to mount in shoes and white cotton stockings, and white jean small-clothes, with a flowing yellow-striped gingham coat, the skirts of which fluttered in the breeze behind him, his withered face shaded by a huge Panama hat, and with enormous silver spurs on his heels, the rowels two inches in diameter.

Away lumbered the *volante*, and away we pranced after it. For the first two miles the scenery was tame enough ; but after that, the gently swelling eminences on each side of the road rose abruptly into rugged mountains ; and the dell between them, which had hitherto been verdant with waving guinea grass, became covered with large trees, under the dark shade of which we lost sight of the sun, and the contrast made every thing around us for a time almost undistinguishable. The forest continued to overshadow the high-road for two miles further, only broken by a small cleared patch now and then, where the sharp-spiked limestone rocks shot up like minarets, and the fire-scathed stumps of the felled trees stood out amongst the rotten earth in the crevices, from which, however, sprang yams and cocoas, and peas of all kinds, and granadillos, and a profusion of herbs and roots, with the greatest luxuriance.

At length we came suddenly upon a cleared space ; a most beautiful spot of ground, where, in the centre of a green plot of velvet grass, intersected with numberless small walks, gravelled from a neighbouring rivulet, stood a large one-story wooden edifice, built in the form of a square,

with a court-yard in the centre. From the moistness of the atmosphere, the outside of the unpainted weatherboarding had a green damp appearance, and so far as the house itself was concerned, there was an air of great discomfort about the place. A large open balcony ran round the whole house on the outside ; and fronting us there was a clumsy wooden porch supported on pillars, with the open door yawning behind it.

The hills on both sides were cleared, and planted with most luxuriant coffee-bushes, and provision grounds, while the house was shaded by several splendid star-apple and kennip-trees, and there was a border of rich flowering shrubs surrounding it on all sides. The hand of woman had been there !

A few half-naked negroes were lounging about, and on hearing our approach they immediately came up and stared wildly at us.

“ All fresh from the ship these,” quoth Bang.

“ Can’t be,” said Transom. “ Try and see.”

I spoke some of the commonest Spanish expressions to them, but they neither understood them, nor could they answer me. But Bang was more successful in Eboe and Mandingo, both of which he spoke fluently—accomplishments which I ought to have excepted, by the by, when I declared he was little skilled in any tongue but English.

Large herds of cattle were grazing on the skirts of the wood, and about one hundred mules were scrambling and picking their food in a rocky river-course which bisected the valley. The hills, tree-covered, rose around this solitary residence in all directions, as if it had been situated in the bottom of a punch-bowl ; while a small waterfall, about thirty feet high, fell so near one of the corners of the building, that when the wind set that way, as I after-

wards found, the spray moistened my hair through the open window in my sleeping apartment. We proceeded to the door and dismounted, following the example of our host, and proceeded to help the gentlewomen to alight from the *volante*. When we all were accounted for in the porch, Don Ricardo began to shout, "*Criados, criados, ven acá—pendejos, ven acá!*" The call was for some time unattended to; at length, two tall, good-looking, decently-dressed negroes made their appearance, and took charge of our *bestias* and carriage; but all this time there was no appearance of any living creature belonging to the family.

The dark hall, into which the porch opened, was paved with the usual diamond-shaped bricks or tiles, but was not ceiled, the rafters of the roof being exposed; there was little or no furniture in it, that we could see, except a clumsy table in the centre of the room, and one or two of the leathern-backed reclining chairs, such as Whiffle used to patronise. Several doors opened from this comfortable saloon, which was innocent of paint, into other apartments, one of which was ajar.

"*Estraño*," murmured Don Ricardo, "*muy estraño!*"

"Coolish reception this, Tom," quoth Aaron Bang.

"Deucedly so," said the skipper.

But Campana, hooking his little fat wife under his arm, while we did the agreeable to the nieces, now addressed himself to enter, with the constant preliminary ejaculation of all well-bred Spaniards in crossing a friend's threshold, "*Ave Maria purissima*," when we were checked by a loud tearing fit of coughing, which seemed almost to suffocate the patient, and female voices in great alarm, proceeding from the room beyond.

Presently a little anatomy of a man presented himself at the door of the apartment, wringing his hands, and

apparently in great misery. Campana and his wife, with all the alacrity of kindhearted people, immediately went up to him, and said something which I did not overhear, but the poor creature to whom they spoke appeared quite bewildered. "What is it, Don Picador?" at length we could hear Campana say—"what is it? Is it my poor dear Maria who is worse, or what—speak, man—may my wife enter?"

"*Si, si*—yes, yes," said the afflicted Don Picador—"yes, yes, let her go in—send—for I am unable to think or act—send one of my people back post to Santiago for the doctor—haste, haste. *Sangre—hecha sangre por la boca.*"

"Good God, why did you not say so before?" rejoined Campana.

Here his wife called loudly to her husband, "*Ricardo, Ricardo, por amor de su alma, manda por el medico*—she has burst a bloodvessel—Maria is dying!"

"Let me mount myself; I will go myself."—And the excellent man rushed for the door, when the poor heart-broken Picador clung to his knees.

"No, no, don't leave me. Send some one else"——

"Take care, man, let me go"——

Transom and I volunteered in a breath—"No, no, I will go myself," continued Don Ricardo; "let go, man—God help me, the old creature is crazed,—*el viejo no vale.*"

"Here, here! help, Don Ricardo!" cried his wife.

Off started Transom for the doctor, and into the room rushed Don Picador and Campana, and, from the sounds in the sick-chamber, all seemed bustle and confusion; at length the former appeared to be endeavouring to lift the poor sufferer, so as to enable her to sit up in bed; in the meantime her coughing had gradually abated into a low suffocating convulsive gasp.



“ So, so, lift her up, man,” we could hear Campana say; “ lift her up—quick—or she will be suffocated.”

At length, in a moment of great irritation, excited on the one hand by his intense interest in the poor suffering girl, and anger at the peevish, helpless Don Picador, Don Ricardo, to our unutterable surprise, rapped out, in *gude* broad Scotch, as he brushed away Señor Cangrejo from the bedside with a violence that spun him out of the door—“ *God—the auld doited deevil is as fusionless as a docken.*”

My jaw dropped—I was thunderstruck—Bang’s eye met mine—“ Murder !” quoth Bang, so soon as his astonishment let him collect breath enough, “ and here I have been for two whole days practising Spanish, to my great improvement no doubt, upon a Scotchman—how edified he must have been !”

“ But the *docken*, man,” said I—“ *fusionless as a docken*—how classic ! what an exclamation to proceed from the mouth of a solemn Don !”

“ No gibes regarding the *docken*,” promptly chimed in Bang; “ it is a highly respectable vegetable, let me tell you, and useful on occasion, which is more.”

The noise in the room ceased, and presently Campana joined us. “ We must proceed,” said he, “ it will never do for you to deliver the jewels *now*, Mr Cringle; she is too much excited already, even from seeing me.”

But it was more easy to determine on proceeding than to put it in execution, for a heavy cloud, that had been overhanging the small valley the whole morning, had by this time spread out and covered the entire face of nature like a sable pall; the birds of the air flew low, and seemed perfectly gorged with the superabundance of flies, which were thickly betaking themselves for shelter under the evergreen leaves of the bushes. All the winged crea-

tion, great and small, were fast hastening to the cover of the leaves and branches of the trees. The cattle were speeding to the hollows under the impending rocks; negroes, men, women, and children, were hurrying with their hoes on their shoulders past the windows to their huts. Several large bloodhounds had ventured into the hall, and were crouching with a low whine at our feet. The huge carrion crows were the only living things which seemed to brave the approaching *chubasco*, and were soaring high up in the heavens, appearing to touch the black agitated fringe of the lowering thunder clouds. All other kinds of winged creatures, parrots, and pigeons, and cranes, had vanished by this time under the thickest trees, and into the deepest coverts, and the wild-ducks were shooting past in long lines, piercing the thick air with outstretched neck and clanging wing.

Suddenly the wind fell, and the sound of the waterfall increased, and grew rough and loud, and the undefinable rushing noise that precedes a heavy fall of rain in the tropics, the voice of the wilderness, moaned through the high woods, until at length the clouds sank upon the valley in boiling mists, rolling halfway down the surrounding hills; and the water of the stream, whose scanty rill but an instant before hissed over the precipice, in a small transparent ribbon of clear grass-green, sprinkled with white foam, and then threaded its way round the large rocks in its capacious channel, like a silver eel twisting through a dry desert, now changed in a moment to a dark turgid chocolate colour; and even as we stood and looked, lo! a column of water from the mountains pitched in thunder over the face of the precipice, making the earth tremble, and driving up from the rugged face of the everlasting rocks in smoke, and forcing the air into eddies and sudden blasts, which tossed the branches of

the trees that overhung it, as they were dimly seen through clouds of drizzle, as if they had been shaken by a tempest, although there was not a breath stirring elsewhere out of heaven ; while little wavering spiral wreaths of mist rose up thick from the surface of the boiling pool at the bottom of the cataract, like miniature water-spouts, until they were dispersed by the agitation of the air above.

At length the swollen torrent rolled roaring down the narrow valley, filling the whole water-course, about fifty yards wide, and advancing with a solid front a fathom *high*—a fathom *deep* does not convey the idea—like a stream of lava, or as one may conceive of the Red Sea, when, at the stretching forth of the hand of the prophet of the Lord, its mighty waters rolled back and stood heaped up as a wall to the host of Israel. The channel of the stream, which but a minute before I could have leaped across, was the next instant filled, and utterly impassable.

“ You can’t possibly move,” said Don Picador ; “ you can neither go on nor retreat ; you must stay until the river subsides.” And the rain now began pattering in large drops, like scattering shots preceding an engagement, on the wooden shingles with which the house was roofed, gradually increasing to a loud rushing noise, which, as the rooms were not ceiled, prevented a word being heard.

Don Ricardo began to fret and fidget most awfully—“ Beginning of the *seasons*—why, we may not get away for a week, and all the ships will be kept back in their loading.”

All this time, the poor sufferer’s tearing cough was heard in the lulls of the rain ; but it gradually became less and less severe, and the lady of the house, and Señora Campana, and Don Picador’s daughter, at length

slid into the room on tiptoe, leaving one of Don Ricardo's nieces in the room with the sick person.

"She is asleep—hush." The weather continued as bad as ever, and we passed a very comfortless forenoon of it, Picador, Campana, Bang, and myself, perambulating the large dark hall, while the ladies were clustered together in a corner with their work. At length the weather cleared, and I could get a glimpse of mine hostess and her fair daughter. The former was a very handsome woman, about forty; she was tall, and finely formed; her ample figure set off by the very simple, yet, to my taste, very elegant dress formerly described: it was neither more nor less than the plain black silk petticoat over a chemise, made full at the bosom, with a great quantity of lace frills; her dark glossy hair was gathered on the crown of her head in one long braid, twisted round and round, and rising up like a small turret. Over all she wore a loose shawl of yellow silk crape. But the daughter, I never shall forget her! Tall and full, and magnificently shaped—every motion was instinct with grace. Her beautiful black hair hung a yard down her back, long and glossy, in three distinct braids, while it was shaded, Madonna-like, off her high and commanding forehead; her eyebrows—to use little Reefy's simile—looked as if cut out of a mouse's skin; and her eyes themselves, large, dark, and soft, yet brilliant and sparkling at the same time, however contradictory this may read; her nose was straight, and her cheeks firm and oval, and her mouth, her full lips, her ivory teeth, her neck and bosom, were perfect, the latter if any thing giving promise of too matronly a womanhood; but at the time I saw her, nothing could have been more beautiful; and, above all, there was an *inexpressible* charm in the clear transparent darkness of her colourless skin, *into*

*which you thought you could look* ; her shoulders, and the upper part of her arms, were peculiarly beautiful. Nothing is so exquisitely lovely as the upper part of a beautiful woman's arm, and yet we have lived to see this admirable feature shrouded and lost in those abominable gigots.—I say, messmate, lend a hand, and originate a crusade against those vile appendages. I will lead into action if you like,—“ Woe unto the women that sew pillows to all arm-holes,” Ezekiel, xiii. 18. May I venture on such a quotation in such a place ?—She was extremely like her brother ; and her fine face was overspread with the pale cast of thought—a settled melancholy, like the shadow of a cloud in a calm day on a summer landscape, mantled over her fine features ; and although she moved with the air of a princess, and was possessed of that natural politeness which far surpasses all artificial polish, yet the heaviness of her heart was apparent in every motion, as well as in all she said.

Many people labour under an unaccountable delusion, imagining, in their hallucination, that a Frenchwoman, for instance, or even an Englishwoman—nay, some have been heard to say that a Scotchwoman—has been known to *walk*. Egregious errors all ! An Irishwoman of the true Milesian descent can *walk* a step or two sometimes, but all other women, fair or brown, short or tall, stout or thin, only stump, shuffle, jig, or amble—none but a Spaniard can *walk*.

Once or twice she tried to enter into conversation with me on indifferent subjects ; but there was a constant tendency to approach (against her own pre-arranged determination) the one, all-absorbing one, the fate of her poor brother. “ Oh, had you but known him, Mr Cringle—had you but known him in his boyhood, before bad company had corrupted him ! ” exclaimed she,

after having asked me if he died penitent, and she turned away and wept. "*Francisca*," said a low hoarse female voice from the other room; "*Francisca, ven acá, mi querida hermana.*" The sweet girl rose, and sped across the floor with the grace of Taglioni, (oh, the *legs Taglionis*! as poor dear Bang would have ventured to have said, if the sylphide had then been known,) and presently returning, whispered something to her mother, who rose and drew Don Picador aside. The waspish old man shook himself clear of his wife, as he said with indecent asperity—"No, no, she will but make a fool of herself."

His wife drew herself up,—

"She never made a fool of herself, Don Picador, but once; and God forgive those who were the cause of it. It is not kind of you, indeed it is not."

"Well, well," rejoined the querulous old man, "do as you will, do as you will,—always crossing me, always crossing."

His wife took no farther notice, but stepped across the room to me,—“Our poor dying Maria knows you are here; and probably you are not aware that *he* wrote to her after his”—her voice quavered—“after his condemnation, the night before he suffered, that you were the only one who showed him kindness; and she has also read the newspapers giving an account of the trial. She wishes to see you—will you pleasure her? Señora Campana has made her acquainted that you are the bearer of some trinkets belonging to him, from which she infers you witnessed his last moments, as one of them, she was told, was her picture, poor dear girl; and she knew *that must have grown to his heart till the last*. But it will be too agitating. I will try and dissuade her from the interview until the doctor comes, at all events.”



The worthy lady stepped again into Maria's apartment, and I could not avoid hearing what passed.

"My dear Maria, Mr Cringle has no objection to wait on you; but after your severe attack this morning, I don't think it will be wise. Delay it until Dr Bergara comes—at any rate, until the evening, Maria."

"Mother," she said, in a weak, plaintive voice, although husky from the phlegm which was fast coagulating in her throat—"Mother, I already have ceased to be of this world; I am dying, dearest mother, fast dying; and oh, thou All-good and All-merciful Being, against whom I have fearfully sinned, would that the last struggle were now o'er, and that my weary spirit were released and my shame hidden in the silent tomb, and my sufferings and very name forgotten!" She paused and gasped for breath; I thought it was all over with her; but she rallied again and proceeded—"Time is rapidly ebbing from me, dearest mother,—for mother I must call you, more than a mother have you been to me—and the ocean of eternity is opening to my view. If I am to see him at all, I must see him now; I shall be more agitated by the expectation of the interview than by seeing him at once. Oh! let me see him now, let me look on one who witnessed *his* last moments."

I could see Señora Cangrejo where she stood. She crossed her hands on her bosom, and looked up towards heaven, and then turned mournfully towards me, and beckoned me to approach. I entered the small room, which had been fitted up by the poor girl with some taste; the furniture was better than any I had seen in a Spanish house before, and there was a mat on the floor, and some exquisite miniatures and small landscapes on the walls. It was her boudoir, opening apparently into a bedroom beyond. It was lighted by a large open unglazed win-

dow, with a row of wooden balustrades beyond it, forming part of a small balcony. A Carmelite friar, a venerable old man, with the hot tears fast falling from his eyes over his wrinkled cheeks, whom I presently found to be the excellent Padre Carera, sat in a large chair by the bedside, with a silver cup in his hand, beside which lay a large crucifix of the same metal; he had just administered extreme unction, and the *viaticum*, he fondly hoped, would prove a passport for his dear child to another and a better world. As I entered he rose, held out his hand to me, and moved round to the bottom of the bed.

The shutters had been opened, and, with a suddenness which no one can comprehend who has not lived in these climates, the sun now shone brightly on the flowers and garden plants which grew in a range of pots on the balcony, and lighted up the pale features of a lovely girl, lovely even in the jaws of death, as she lay with her face towards the light, supported in a reclining position on cushions, on a red morocco matrass, laid on a sort of frame or bed.

“ Light was her form, and darkly delicate  
That brow, whereon her native sun had sat,  
But had not marr’d.”——

She was tall, so far as I could judge, but oh, how attenuated! Her lower limbs absolutely made no impression on the matrass, to which her frame appeared to cling, giving a ghastly conspicuousness to the oedematous swelling of her feet, and to her person, for, alas! she was in a way to have become a mother—

“ The offspring of *his* wayward youth,  
When he betrayed Bianca’s truth;  
The maid whose folly could confide  
In *him*, who made her not his bride.”

Her hand, grasping her pocket-handkerchief, drenched, alas, with blood, hung over the side of the bed, thin and pale, with her long taper fingers as transparent as if they had been fresh cut alabaster, with the blue veins winding through her wrists, and her bosom wasted and shrunk, and her neck no thicker than her arm, with the pulsations of the large arteries as plain and evident as if the skin had been a film, and her beautiful features, although now sharpened by the near approaching death agony, her lovely mouth, her straight nose, her arched eyebrows, black, like penciled jet lines, and her small ears,—and oh, who can describe her rich black raven hair, lying combed out, and spread all over the bed and pillow? She was dressed in a long loose gown of white crape; it looked like a winding-sheet; but the fire of her eyes—I have purposely not ventured to describe them—the unearthly brilliancy of her large, full, swimming eye!

When I entered, I bowed, and remained standing near the door. She said something, but in so low a voice that I could not catch the words; and when I stepped nearer, on purpose to hear more distinctly, all at once the blood mantled in her cheeks and forehead and throat, like the last gleam of the setting sun; but it faded as rapidly, and once more she lay pale as her smock—

“ Yet not such blush, as mounts when health would show  
All the heart's hue in that delightful glow;  
But 'twas a hectic tint of secret care,  
That for a burning moment fever'd there;  
And the wild sparkle of her eye seem'd caught  
From high, and lighten'd with electric thought;  
Though its black orb these long low lashes' fringe  
Had temper'd with a melancholy tinge.”

Her voice was becoming more and more weak, she said, so she must be prompt. “ You have some trinkets

for me, Mr Cringle?" I presented them. She kissed the crucifix fervently, and then looked mournfully on her own miniature. "This was thought like *once*, Mr Cringle.—Are the newspaper accounts of his trial correct?" she next asked. I answered, that in the main facts they were. "And do you believe in the commission of all these alleged atrocities by him?" I remained silent. "Yes, they are but too true. Hush, hush," said she—"look there."

I did as she requested. There, glancing bright in the sunshine, a most beautiful butterfly fluttered in the air, in the very middle of the open window. When we first saw it, it was flitting gaily and happily amongst the plants and flowers that were blooming in the balcony, but it gradually became more and more slow on the wing, and at last poised itself so unusually steady for an insect of its class, that even had Maria not spoken, it would have attracted my attention. Below it, on the window sill, near the wall, with head erect, and its little basilisk eyes upturned towards the lovely fly, crouched a camelion lizard; its beautiful body, when I first looked at it, was a bright sea-green. It moved into the sunshine, a little away from the shade of the laurel bush, which grew on the side it first appeared on, and suddenly the back became transparent amber, the legs and belly continuing green. From its breast under the chin, it every now and then shot out a semicircular film of a bright scarlet colour, like a leaf of a tulip stretched vertically, or the pectoral fin of a fish.

This was evidently a decoy, and the poor fly was by degrees drawn down towards it, either under the impression of its being in reality a flower, or impelled by some impulse which it could not resist. It gradually fluttered nearer and more near, the reptile remaining all the while

steady as a stone, until it made a sudden spring, and in the next moment the small mealy wings were quivering on each side of the camelion's tiny jaws. While in the act of gorging its prey, a little fork, like a wire, was projected from the opposite corner of the window ; presently a small round black snout, with a pair of little fiery blazing eyes, appeared, and a thin black neck glanced in the sun. The lizard saw it. I could fancy it trembled. Its body became of a dark blue, then ashy pale ; the imitation of the flower, the gaudy fin was withdrawn, it appeared to shrink back as far as it could, but it was nailed or fascinated to the window sill, for its feet did not move. The head of the snake approached, with its long forked tongue shooting out and shortening, and with a low hissing noise. By this time about two feet of its body was visible, lying with its white belly on the wooden beam, moving forward with a small horizontal wavy motion, the head and six inches of the neck being a little raised. I shrunk back from the serpent, but no one else seemed to have any dread of it ; indeed, I afterwards learned, that this kind being good mousers, and otherwise quite harmless, were, if any thing, encouraged about houses in the country. I looked again ; its open mouth was now within an inch of the lizard, which by this time seemed utterly paralysed and motionless ; the next instant its head was drawn into the snake's mouth, and by degrees the whole body disappeared, as the reptile gorged it, and I could perceive from the lump which gradually moved down the snake's neck, that it had been sucked into its stomach. Involuntarily I raised my hand, when the whole suddenly disappeared.

I turned, I could scarcely tell why, to look at the dying girl. A transient flush had again lit up her pale wasted face. She was evidently greatly excited. "Can

you read me that riddle, Mr Cringle? Does no analogy present itself to you between what you have seen, between the mysterious power possessed by these subtil reptiles, and—Look—look again.”

A large and still more lovely butterfly suddenly rose from beneath where the snake had vanished, all glittering in the dazzling sunshine, and, after fluttering for a moment, floated steadily up into the air, and disappeared in the blue sky. My eye followed it as long as it was visible, and when it once more declined to where we had seen the snake, I saw a most splendid dragonfly, about three inches long, like a golden bodkin, with its gauze-like wings moving so quickly, as it hung steadily poised in mid air, like a hawk preparing to stoop, that the body seemed to be surrounded by silver tissue, or a bright halo, while it glanced in the sunbeam.

“Can you not read it yet, Mr Cringle? can you not read my story in the fate of the first beautiful fly, and the miserable end of my Federico, in that of the lizard? And oh may the last appearance of that ethereal thing, which but now rose, and melted into the lovely sky, be a true type of what I shall be! But that poor insect, that remains there suspended between heaven and earth, shall I say hell, what am I to think of it?”

The dragonfly was still there. She continued—“*En purgatorio, ah Dios, tu quedas en purgatorio,*” as if the fly had represented the unhappy young pirate’s soul in limbo. Oh, let no one smile at the quaintness of the dying fancy of the poor heart-crushed girl. The weather began to lower again, the wind came past us moaningly—the sun was obscured—large drops of rain fell heavily into the room—a sudden dazzling flash of lightning took place, *and the dragonfly was no longer there.* A long



low wild cry was heard. I started, and my flesh creeped. The cry was repeated. "*Es el—el mismo, y ningun otro. Me venga, Federico ; me venga, mi querido !*" shrieked poor Maria, with a supernatural energy, and with such piercing distinctness, that it was heard shrill even above the rolling thunder.

I turned to look at Maria—another flash. It glanced on the crucifix which the old priest had elevated at the foot of the bed, full in her view. It was nearer, the thunder was louder. "Is that the rain-drops which are falling heavily on the floor through the open window?" Oh God! Oh God! it is her warm heart's-blood, which was bubbling from her mouth like a crimson fountain. Her pale fingers were clasped on her bosom in the attitude of prayer—a gentle quiver of her frame—and the poor brokenhearted girl, and her unborn babe, "slept the sleep that knows no waking."

## CHAPTER III.

## SCENES IN CUBA.

*Ariel.* ————— Safely in harbour  
Is the king's ship ; in the deep nook, where once  
Thou call'dst me up at midnight to fetch dew  
From the still-vexed Bermoothes—there she's hid.  
*The Tempest.*

THE spirit had indeed fled—the ethereal essence had departed—and the poor wasted and blood-stained husk which lay before us, could no longer be moved by our sorrows, or gratified by our sympathy. Yet I stood riveted to the spot, until I was aroused by the deep-toned voice of Padre Carera, who, lifting up his hands towards heaven, addressed the Almighty in extempore prayer, beseeching his mercy to our erring sister who had just departed. The unusualness of this startled me.—“As the tree falls, so must it lie,” had been the creed of my forefathers, and was mine ; but now for the first time I heard a clergyman wrestling in mental agony, and interceding with the God who hath said, “Repent before the night cometh, in which no man can work,” for a sinful creature, whose worn-out frame was now as a clod of the valley. But I had little time for consideration, as presently all the negro servants of the establishment set up a loud howl, as if they had lost their nearest and dearest. “Oh, our poor dear young mistress is dead ! She has gone to the bosom of the Virgin ! She is gone to be

happy!"—"Then why the deuce make such a yelling?" quoth Bang in the other room, when this had been translated to him. Glad to leave the chamber of death, I entered the large hall, where I had left our friend.

"I say, Tom—awful work. Hear how the rain pours, and—murder—such a flash! Why, in Jamaica, we don't startle greatly at lightning, but absolutely I heard it hiss—there, again"—the noise of the thunder stopped further colloquy, and the wind now burst down the valley with a loud roar.

Don Ricardo joined us. "My good friends—we are in a scrape here—what is to be done?—a melancholy affair altogether."—Bang's curiosity here fairly got the better of him.

"I say, *Don Ricardibus*—do—beg pardon, though—do give over this humbugging outlandish lingo of yours—speak like a Christian, in your mother tongue, and leave off your Spanish, which *now*, since I know it is all a *bam*, seems to sit as strangely on you as my grandmother's *toupée* would on Tom Cringle's Mary."

"Now do pray, Mr Bang," said I, when Don Ricardo broke in—

"Why, Mr Bang, I am, as you now know, a Scotchman."

"How do I know any such thing—that is, for a certainty—while you keep cruising amongst so many lingoers, as Tom there says?"

"The *docken*, man," said I.—Don Ricardo smiled.

"I *am* a Scotchman, my dear sir; and the same person who, in his youth, was neither more nor less than wee Richy Cloche, in the long town of Kirkaldy, is in his old age *Don Ricardo Campana* of St Jago de Cuba. But more of this anon,—at present we are in the house of mourning, and alas the day! that it should be so."

By this time the storm had increased most fearfully, and as Don Ricardo, Aaron, and myself, sat in the dark dark corner of the large gloomy hall, we could scarcely see each other, for the lightning had now ceased, and the darkness was so thick, that had it not been for the light from the large funeral wax tapers, which had been instantly lit upon poor Maria's death, in the room where she lay, that streamed through the open door, we should have been unable to see our very fingers before us.

"What is that?" said Campana; "heard you nothing, gentlemen?"

"By this the storm grew loud apace,  
The water-wraith was shrieking;  
And in the scowl of heaven each face  
Grew dark as they were speaking."

In the lulls of the rain and the blast, the same long low cry was heard which had startled me by Maria's bedside, and occasioned the sudden and fatal exertion which had been the cause of the bursting out afresh of the blood-vessel.

"Why," said I, "it is little more than three o'clock in the afternoon yet, dark as it is; let us sally out, Mr Bang, for I verily believe that the hollo we have heard is my captain's voice, and, if I conjecture rightly, he must have arrived at the other side of the river, probably with the doctor."

"Why, Tom," quoth Aaron, "it is only three in the afternoon, as you say, although by the sky I could almost vouch for its being midnight,—but I don't like that shouting—Did you ever read of a water-kelpie, Don *Richy*?"

"Poo, poo, nonsense," said the Don; "Mr Cringle is, I fear, right enough." At this moment the wind thundered at the door and window shutters, and howled amongst

the neighbouring trees and round the roof, as if it would have blown the house down upon our devoted heads. The cry was again heard during a momentary pause.

“Zounds!” said Bang, “it is the skipper’s voice, as sure as fate—he must be in danger—let us go and see, Tom.”

“Take me with you,” said Campana,—the foremost always when any good deed was to be done,—and, in place of clapping on his great-coat to meet the storm, to our unutterable surprise, he began to disrobe himself, all to his trowsers and large straw hat. He then called one of the servants, “*Trae me un lasso.*” The *lasso*, a long thong of plaited hide, was forthwith brought; he coiled it up in his left hand. “Now, Pedro,” said he to the negro servant who had fetched it, (a tall strapping fellow,) “you and Gaspar follow me. Gentlemen, are you ready?” Gaspar appeared, properly accoutred, with a long pole in one hand and a thong similar to Don Ricardo’s in the other, he as well as his comrade being stark naked all to their waistcloths. “Ah, well done, my sons,” said Don Ricardo, as both the negroes prepared to follow him. So off we started to the door, although we heard the *tormenta* raging without with appalling fury. Bang undid the latch, and the next moment he was flat on his back, the large leaf having flown open with tremendous violence, capsizing him like an infant.

The Padre from the inner chamber came to our assistance, and by our joint exertions we at length got the door to again and barricaded, after which we made our exit from the lee-side of the house by a window. Under other circumstances, it would have been difficult to refrain from laughing at the appearance we made. We were all drenched in an instant after we left the shelter of the house, and there was old Campana, naked to the waist,

with his large *sombrero* and long pigtail hanging down his back, like a mandarin of twenty buttons. Next followed his two black assistants, naked as I have described them, all three with their coils of rope in their hands, like a hangman and his deputies ; then advanced friend Bang and myself, without our coats or hats, with handkerchiefs tied round our heads, and our bodies bent down so as to stem the gale as strongly as we could.

But the planting attorney, a great schemer, a kind of Will Wimble in his way, had thought fit, of all things in the world, to bring his umbrella, which the wind, as might have been expected, reversed most unceremoniously the moment he attempted to hoist it, and tore it from the staff, so that, on the impulse of the moment, he had to clutch the flying red silk and thrust his head through the centre, where the stick had stood, as if he had been some curious flower. As we turned the corner of the house, the full force of the storm met us right in the teeth, when flap flew Don Ricardo's hat past us ; but the two blackamoors had taken the precaution to strap each of theirs down with a strong grass lanyard. We continued to work to windward, while every now and then the hollo came past us on the gale louder and louder, until it guided us to the fording which we had crossed on our first arrival. We stopped there ;—the red torrent was rushing tumultuously past us, but we saw nothing save a few wet and shivering negroes on the opposite side, who had sheltered themselves under a cliff, and were busily employed in attempting to light a fire. The holloing continued.

“ Why, what *can* be wrong ? ” at length said Don Ricardo, and he shouted to the people on the opposite side.

He might as well have spared his breath, for, although they saw his gestures and the motion of his lips, they no more heard him than we did them, as they very conside-



rately in return made mouths at us, bellowing no doubt that they could not hear us.

“Don Ricardo—Don Ricardo!” at this crisis sung out Gaspar, who had clambered up the rock, to have a peep about him,—“*Ave Maria—Allá son dos pobres, que peresquen pronto, si nosotros no pueden ayudarlos.*”

“Whereabouts?” said Campana—“whereabouts? speak, man, speak.”

“Down in the valley—about a quarter of a league, I see two men on a large rock, in the middle of the stream; the wind is in that direction, it must be them we heard.”

“God be gracious to us! true enough—true enough,—let us go to them then, my children.” And we again all cantered off after the excellent Don Ricardo. But before we could reach the spot, we had to make a *detour*, and come down upon it from the precipitous brow of the beetling cliff above, for there was no beach nor shore to the swollen river, which was here very deep and surged, rushing under the hollow bank with comparatively little noise, which was the reason we heard the cries so distinctly.

The unfortunates who were in peril, whoever they might be, seemed to comprehend our motions, for one of them held out a white handkerchief, which I immediately answered by a similar signal, when the shouting ceased, until, guided by the negroes, we reached the verge of the cliff, and looked down from the red crumbling bank on the foaming water, as it swept past beneath. It was here about thirty yards broad, divided by a rocky wedgelike islet, on which grew a profusion of dark bushes and one large tree, whose topmost branches were on a level with us where we stood. This tree was divided, about twelve feet from the root, into two limbs, in the fork of which sat, like a big monkey, no less a personage than Captain

Transom himself, wet and dripping, with his clothes besmeared with mud, and shivering with cold. At the foot of the tree sat in rueful mood, a small antique beau of an old man, in a coat which had once been blue silk, wearing breeches, the original colour of which no man could tell, and without his wig, his clear bald pate shining amidst the surrounding desolation like an ostrich's egg. Beside these worthies stood two trembling way-worn mules with drooping heads, their long ears hanging down most disconsolately. The moment we came in sight, the skipper hailed us.

"Why, I am hoarse with bawling, Don Ricardo, but here am I and el Doctor Pavo Real, in as sorry a plight as any two gentlemen need be. On attempting the ford two hours ago, blockheads as we were—beg pardon, Don Pavo"—the doctor bowed, and grinned like a baboon—"we had nearly been drowned; indeed, we should have been drowned entirely, had we not brought up on this island of Barataria here.—But how is the young lady? tell me that," said the excellent-hearted fellow, even in the midst of his own danger.

"Mind *yourself*, my beautiful child," cried Bang. "How are we to get *you* on *terra firma*?"

"Poo—in the easiest way possible," rejoined he, with true seamanlike self-possession. "I see you have ropes—Tom Cringle, heave me the end of the line which Don Ricardo carries, will you?"

"No, no—I can do that myself," said Don Ricardo, and with a swing he hove the leathern noose at the skipper, and whipped it over his neck in a twinkling. The Scotch Spaniard, I saw, was pluming himself on his skill, but Transom was up to him, for in an instant he dropped out of it, while in slipping through he let it fall over a broken limb of the tree.

“Such an eel—such an eel!” shouted the attendant negroes, both expert hands with the *lasso* themselves.

“Now, Don Ricardo, since I am not to be had, make your end of the thong fast round that large stone there.” Campana did so. “Ah, that will do.” And so saying, the skipper warped himself to the top of the cliff with great agility. He was no sooner in safety himself, however, than the idea of having left the poor doctor in peril flashed on him.

“I must return—I must return! If the river rises, the *body* will be drowned out and out.”

And notwithstanding our entreaties, he *did* return as he came, and descending the tree, began apparently to argue with the little *medico*, and to endeavour to persuade him to ascend, and make his escape as he himself had done; but it would not do. Pavo Real—as brave a little man as ever was seen—made many salaams and obeisances, but move he would not. He shook his head repeatedly, in a very solemn way, as if he had said, “My very excellent friends, I am much obliged to you, but it is impossible; my dignity would be compromised by such a proceeding.”

Presently Transom appeared to wax very emphatic, and pointed to a pinnacle of limestone rock, which had stood out like a small steeple above the surface of the flashing, dark red eddies, when we first arrived on the spot, but now only stopped the water with a loud gurgle, the top rising and disappearing as the stream surged past, like a buoy *jaugling* in a tideway. The small man still shook his head, but the water now rose so rapidly, that there was scarcely dry standing room for the two poor devils of mules, while the doctor and the skipper had the greatest difficulty in finding a footing for themselves.

Time and circumstances began to press, and Transom,

after another unavailing attempt to persuade the doctor, began apparently to rouse himself, and muster his energies. He first drove the mules forcibly into the stream at the side opposite where we stood, which was the deepest water, and least broken by rocks and stones, and we had the pleasure to see them scramble out safe and sound; he then put his hand to his mouth, and hailed us to throw him a rope—it was done—he caught it, and then by a significant gesture to Campana, gave him to understand that now was the time. The Don, comprehending him, hove his noose with great precision, right over the little doctor's head, and before he recovered from his surprise, the captain slipped it under his arms, and signed to haul taught, while the *medico* kicked, and spurred, and backed like a restive horse. At one and the same moment, Transom made fast a *guy* round his waist, and we hoisted away, while he hauled on the other line, so that we landed the Lilliputian Esculapius safe on the top of the bank, with the wind nearly out of his body, however, from his violent exertions, and the running of the noose.

It was now the work of a moment for the captain to ascend the tree and again warp himself ashore, when he set himself to apologize with all his might and main, pleading strong necessity; and having succeeded in pacifying the offended dignity of the doctor, we turned towards the house.

“Look out there,” sung out Campana sharply.

Time indeed, thought I, for right a-head of us, as if an invisible gigantic ploughshare had passed over the woods, a valley or chasm was suddenly opened down the hill-side with a noise like thunder, and branches and whole limbs of trees were instantly torn away, and tossed into the air like straws.

“Down on your noses, my fine fellows,” cried the

skipper. We were all flat in an instant, except the *medico*, the stubborn little brute, who *stood* until the tornado reached him, when in a twinkling he was cast on his back, with a violence sufficient, as I thought, to have driven his breath for ever and aye out of his body. While we lay we heard all kinds of things hurtle past us through the air, pieces of timber, branches of trees, coffee-bushes, and even stones. Presently it lulled again, and we got on end to look round us.

“How will the old house stand all this, Don Ricardo?” said the drenched skipper. He had to shout to be heard. The Don was too busy to answer, but once more strode on towards the dwelling, as if he expected something even worse than we had experienced to be still awaiting us. By the time we reached it, it was full of negroes, men, women, and children, whose huts had already been destroyed, poor, drenched, miserable devils, with scarcely any clothing; and to crown our comfort, we found the roof leaking in many places. By this time the night began to fall, and our prospects were far from flattering. The rain had entirely ceased, nor was there any lightning, but the storm was most tremendous, blowing in gusts, and veering round from east to north with the speed of thought. The force of the gale, however, gradually declined, until the wind subsided altogether, and every thing became quite still. The low murmured conversation of the poor negroes who environed us, was heard distinctly; the hard breathing of the sleeping children could even be distinguished. But I was by no means sure that the hurricane was over, and Don Ricardo and the rest seemed to think as I did, for there was not a word interchanged between us for some time.

“Do you hear that?” at length said Aaron Bang, as a

low moaning sound rose wailing into the night air. It approached and grew louder.

“The voice of the approaching tempest amongst the higher branches of the trees,” said the captain.

The rushing noise overhead increased, but still all was so calm where we sat, that you could have heard a pin drop. Poo, thought I, it *has* passed over us after all—no fear now, when one reflects how completely sheltered we are. Suddenly, however, the lights in the room where the body lay were blown out, and the roof groaned and creaked as if it had been the bulkheads of a ship in a tempestuous sea.

“We shall have to cut and run from this anchorage presently, after all,” said I; “the house will never hold on till morning.”

The words were scarcely out of my mouth, when, as if a thunderbolt had struck it, one of the windows in the hall was driven in with a roar, as if the Falls of Niagara had been pouring overhead, and the tempest having thus forced an entrance, the roof of that part of the house where we sat was blown up, as if by gunpowder—ay, in the twinkling of an eye; and there we were with the bare walls, and the angry heaven overhead, and the rain descending in bucketsful. Fortunately, two large joists or couples, being deeply embedded in the substance of the walls, remained, when the rafters and ridgepole were torn away, or we must have been crushed in the ruins.

There was again a deathlike lull, the wind fell to a small melancholy sough amongst the tree-tops, and once more, where we sat, there was not a breath stirring. So complete was the calm now, that after a light had been struck, and placed on the floor in the middle of the room, showing the surrounding group of shivering half-naked savages, with fearful distinctness, the flame shot up straight as an arrow, clear and bright, although the dis-



tant roar of the storm still thundered afar off as it rushed over the mountain above us.

This unexpected stillness frightened the women even more than the fierceness of the gale when at the loudest had done.

“We must go forth,” said Señora Campana; “the elements are only gathering themselves for a more dreadful hurricane than what we have already experienced. We must go forth to the little chapel in the wood, or the next burst may, and *will*, bury us under the walls:” and she moved towards Maria’s room, where, by this time, lights had again been placed. “We must move the body,” we could hear her say; “we must all proceed to the chapel; in a few minutes the storm will be raging again louder than ever.”

“And my wife is very right,” said Don Ricardo; “so Gaspar, call the other people; have some mats, and *quatre*s, and mattresses carried down to the chapel, and we shall all remove, for, with half of the roof gone, it is but tempting the Almighty to remain here longer.”

The word was passed, and we were soon under weigh, four negroes leading the van, carrying the uncoffined body of the poor girl on a sofa; while two servants, with large splinters of a sort of resinous wood for flambeaux, walked by the side of it. Next followed the women of the family, covered up with all the cloaks and spare garments that could be collected; then came Don Picador Cangrejo, with Ricardo Campana, the skipper, Aaron Bang, and myself; the procession being closed by the household negroes, with more lights, which all burned steadily and clear.

We descended through a magnificent natural avenue of lofty trees (whose brown moss-grown trunks and fantastic boughs were strongly lit up by the blaze of the

torches ; while the fresh white splinter-marks where the branches had been torn off by the storm, glanced bright and clear, and the rain-drops on the dark leaves sparkled like diamonds) towards the river, along whose brink the brimful red-foaming waters rushed past us, close by the edge of the path, now ebbing suddenly a foot or so, and then surging up again beyond their former bounds, as if large stones or trunks of trees above, were from time to time damming up the troubled waters, and then giving way. After walking about four hundred yards, we came to a small but massive chapel, fronting the river, the back part resting against a rocky bank, with two superb cypress-trees growing, one on each side of the door ; we entered, Padre Carera leading the way. The whole area of the interior of the building did not exceed a parallelogram of twenty feet by twelve. At the eastern end, fronting the door, there was a small altar-piece of hard-wood, richly ornamented with silver, and one or two bare wooden benches standing on the tiled floor ; but the chief security we had that the building would withstand the storm, consisted in its having no window or aperture whatsoever, excepting two small *ports*, one on each side of the altar-piece, and the door, which was a massive frame of hard-wood planking.

The body was deposited at the foot of the altar, and the ladies, having been wrapped up in cloaks and blankets, were safely lodged in *quattres*, while *we*, the gentlemen of the comfortless party, seated ourselves, disconsolately enough, on the wooden benches.

The door was made fast, after the servants had kindled a blazing wood-fire on the floor ; and although the flickering light cast by the wax tapers in the six large silver candlesticks which were planted beside the bier, as it blended with the red glare of the fire, and fell strong on

the pale uncovered features of the corpse, and on the anxious faces of the women, was often startling enough, yet being conscious of a certain degree of security from the thickness of the walls, we made up our minds to spend the night where we were as well as we could.

“I say, Tom Cringle,” said Aaron Bang, “all the females are snug there, you see; we have a blazing fire on the hearth, and here is some comfort for *we* men slaves;” whereupon he produced two bottles of brandy. Don Ricardo Campana, with whom Bang seemed now to be absolutely *in league*, or, in vulgar phrase, as thick as pickpockets, had brought a goblet of water, and a small silver drinking cup, with him, so we passed the *creature* round, and tried all we could to while away the tedious night. But, as if a sudden thought had struck Aaron, he here tucked the brandy bottle under his arm, and asking me to carry the vessel with the water, he advanced, cup in hand, towards the ladies—

“Now, Tom, interpret carefully.”

“Ahem—Madam and Señoras, this is a heavy night for all of us, but the chapel is damp—allow me to comfort you.”

“*Muchisimos gracias*,” was the gratifying answer, and Bang accordingly gave each of our fair friends a heart-warming taste of brandy and water. There was now a calm for a full hour, and the captain had stepped out to reconnoitre; on his return he reported that the swollen stream had very much subsided.

“Well, we shall get away, I hope, to-morrow morning, after all,” whispered Bang.

He had scarcely spoken when it began to pelt and rain again, as if a waterspout had burst overhead, but there was no wind.

“Come, that is the clearing up of it,” said Cloche.

At this precise moment the priest was sitting with folded arms beyond the body, on a stool or trestle, in the alcove or recess where it lay. Right overhead was one of the small round apertures in the gable of the chapel, which, opening on the bank, appeared to the eye a round black spot in the white-washed wall. The bright wax-lights shed a strong lustre on the worthy *clerigo's* figure, face, and fine bald head, which shone like silver, while the deeper light of the embers on the floor was reflected in ruby tints from the large silver crucifix that hung at his waist. The rushing of the swollen river prevented me hearing distinctly, but it occurred to me once or twice, that a strange gurgling sound proceeded from the aforesaid round aperture. The *padre* seemed to hear it also, for every now and then he looked up, and once he rose and peered anxiously through it; but apparently unable to distinguish any thing, he sat down again. However, my attention had been excited, and half asleep as I was, I kept glimmering in the direction of the *clerigo*.

The captain's deep snore had gradually lengthened out, so as to vouch for *his* forgetfulness, and Bang, Ricardo, Dr Pavo Real, and the ladies, had all subsided into the most perfect quietude, when I noticed, and I quaked and trembled like an aspen leaf as I did so, a long black paw, thrust through, and down from the dark aperture immediately over Padre Carera's head, which, whatever it was, it appeared to scratch sharply, and then giving the *caput* a smart cuff, vanished. The priest started, put up his hand, and rubbed his head, but seeing nothing, again leant back, and was about departing to the land of *nod*, like the others, once more. However, in a few minutes, the same paw again protruded, and this time a peering black snout, with two glancing eyes, was

thrust through the hole after it. The paw kept swinging about like a pendulum for a few seconds, and was then suddenly thrust into the *padre's* open mouth as he lay back asleep, and again giving him another smart crack, vanished as before.

“Hobble, gobble,” gurgled the priest, nearly choked.

“*Ave Maria purissima, que bocado*—what a mouthful!—What *can* that be?”

This was more than I knew, I must confess, and altogether I was consumedly puzzled, but from a disinclination to alarm the women I held my tongue. Padre Carera this time moved away to the other side from beneath the hole, but still within two feet of it—in fact, he could not get in this direction farther for the altar-piece—and being still half asleep, he lay back once more against the wall to finish his nap, taking the precaution, however, to clap on his long shovel hat, shaped like a small canoe, crosswise, with the peaks standing out from each side of his head, in place of wearing it fore and aft, as usual. Well, thought I, a strange party certainly; but drowsiness was fast settling down on me also, when the same black paw was again thrust through the hole, and I distinctly heard a nuzzling, whinnying short bark. I rubbed my eyes and sat up, but before I was quite awake, the head and neck of a large Newfoundland dog was shoved into the chapel through the round aperture, and making a long stretch, with the black paws thrust down and resting on the wall, supporting the creature, the animal suddenly snatched the *padre's* hat off his head, and giving it an angry worry—as much as to say, “Confound it—I had hoped to have had the head in it”—it dropped it on the floor, and with a loud yell, Sneezer, my own old dear Sneezer, leaped into the midst of us, floundering amongst the sleeping women, and kicking the

firebrands about, making them hiss again with the water he shook from his shaggy coat, and frightening all hands like the very devil.

“Sneezer, you villain, how came *you* here !” I exclaimed, in great amazement—“how came you here, sir?” The dog knew me at once, and when benches were reared against him, after the women had huddled into a corner, and every thing was in sad confusion, he ran to me, and leaped on my neck, gasping and *yelping* ; but finding that I was angry, and in no mood for toying, he planted himself on end so suddenly, in the middle of the floor, close by the fire, that all our hands were stayed, and no one could find in his heart to strike the poor dumb brute, he sat so quiet and motionless. “Sneezer, my boy, what have you to say—where have you come from?” He looked in the direction of the door, and then walked deliberately towards it, and tried to open it with his paws.

“Now,” said the captain, “that little scamp, who would insist on riding with me to St Jago, to see, as he said, if he might not be of use in fetching the surgeon from the ship in case I could not find Dr Bergara, has come back, although I desired him to stay on board. The puppy must have returned in his cursed troublesome zeal, for in no other way could your dog be here. Certainly, however, he did not know that I had fallen in with Dr Pavo Real ;” and the good-natured fellow’s heart melted as he continued—“Returned—why, he may be drowned—Cringles, take care little Reefpoint be not drowned.”

Sneezer lowered his black snout, and for a moment poked it into the white ashes of the fire, and then raising it and stretching his neck upwards to its full length, he gave a short bark, and then a long loud howl.



“My life upon it, the poor boy is gone,” said I.

“But what can we do?” said Don Ricardo; “it is as dark as pitch.”

And we again set ourselves to have a small rally at the brandy and water, as a resolver of our doubts, whether we should sit still till daybreak, or sally forth now and run the chance of being drowned, with but small hope of doing any good; and the old priest having left the other end of the chapel, where the ladies were once more reposing, now came to join our council of war, and to have his share of the *agua ardiente*.

The noise of the rain increased, and there was still a little puff of wind now and then, so that the *padre*, taking an *alfombra*, or small mat used to kneel on, and placing it on the step where the folding-doors opened inwards, took a cloak on his shoulders, and sat himself down with his back against the leaves, to keep them closed, as the lock or bolt was broken, and was in the act of swigging off his cupful of comfort, when a strong gust drove the door open, as if the devil himself had kicked it, capsized the *padre*, blew out the lights once more, and scattered the brands of the fire all about us. Transom and I started up, the women shrieked; but before we could get the door to again, in rode little Reefpoint on a mule, with the doctor of the Firebrand behind him, bound, or *lashed*, as we call it, to him by a strong thong. The black servants and the females took them for incarnate fiends, I fancy, for the yells and shrieks they set up were tremendous.

“Yo, ho!” sung out little Reefy; “don’t be frightened, ladies—Lord love ye, I am half drowned, and the doctor here is altogether so—quite entirely drowned, I assure you.—I say, *medico*, an’t it true?” And the

little Irish rogue slewed his head round, and gave the exhausted doctor a most comical look.

“Not quite,” quoth the doctor, “but deuced near it. I say, captain, would you have known us? why, we are dyed chocolate colour, you see, in that river, flowing not with milk and honey, but with something miraculously like peas-soup—water I cannot call it.”

“But Heaven help us, why did you try the ford, man?” said Bang.

“You may say that, sir,” responded *wee* Reefy; “but our mule was knocked up, and it was so dark and tempestuous, that we should have perished by the road if we had tried back for St Jago; so seeing a light here, the only indication of a living thing, and the stream looking narrow and comparatively quiet—confound it, it was all the deeper though—we shoved across.”

“But, bless me, if you had been thrown in the stream lashed together as you are, you would have been drowned to a certainty,” said the captain.

“Oh,” said little Reefy, “the doctor was not *on* the mule in crossing—no, no, captain, I knew better—I had him in tow, sir; but after we crossed he was so faint and chill, that I had to lash myself to him to keep him from sliding over the animal’s counter, and walk he could not.”

“But, Master Reefpoint, why came you back? did I not desire you to remain on board of the Firebrand, sir?”

The midshipman looked nonplussed. “Why, captain, I forgot to take my clothes with me, and—and—in truth, sir, I thought our surgeon would be of more use than any outlandish *gallipot* that *you* could carry back.”

The good intentions of the lad saved him farther reproof, although I could not help smiling at his coming back for his clothes, when his whole wardrobe on start-

ing was confined to the two false collars and a tooth-brush.

“ But where is the young lady ? ” said the doctor.

“ Beyond your help, my dear doctor,” said the skipper ; “ she is dead—all that remains of her you see within that small railing there.”

“ Ah, indeed ! ” quoth the *medico*, “ poor girl—poor girl—deep decline—wasted, terribly wasted,” said he, as he returned from the railing of the altar-piece, where he had been to look down upon the body ; and then, as if there never had been such a being as poor Maria Olivera in existence, he continued, “ Pray, Mr Bang, what may you have in that bottle ? ”

“ Brandy, to be sure, doctor,” said Bang.

“ A thimbleful then, if you please.”

“ By all means”—and the planting attorney handed the black bottle to the surgeon, who applied it to his lips, without more circumlocution.

“ Lord love us !—poisoned—Oh, gemini ! ”

“ Why, doctor,” said Transom, “ what *has* come over you ? ”

“ Poisoned, captain—only taste.”

*The bottle contained soy.* It was some time before we could get the poor man quieted ; and when at length he was stretched along a bench, and the fire stirred up, and new wood added to it, the fresh air of early morning began to be scented. At this time we missed Padre Carera, and, in truth, we all fell fast asleep ; but in about an hour or so afterwards, I was awoke by some one stepping across me. The same cause had stirred Transom. It was Aaron Bang, who had been to look out at the door.

“ I say, Cringle, look here—the *padre* and the ser-

vants are digging a grave close to the chapel—are they going to bury the poor girl so suddenly?”

I stepped to the door; the wind had entirely fallen—but it rained very fast—the small chapel door looked out on the still swollen, but subsiding river, and beyond that on the mountain, which rose abruptly from the opposite bank. On the side of the hill facing us was situated a negro village, of about thirty huts, where lights were already twinkling, as if the inmates were preparing to go forth to their work. Far above them, on the ridge, there was a clear cold streak towards the east, against which the outline of the mountain, and the large trees which grew on it, were sharply cut out; but overhead, the firmament was as yet dark and threatening. The morning star had just risen, and was sparkling bright and clear through the branches of a magnificent tree, that shot out from the highest part of the hill; it seemed to have attracted the captain's attention as well as mine.

“Were I romantic now, Mr Cringle, I could expatiate on that view. How cold, and clear, and chaste, every thing looks! The elements have subsided into a perfect calm, every thing is quiet and still, but there is no warmth, no comfort in the scene.”

“What a soaking rain!” said Aaron Bang; “why, the drops are as small as pin points, and so thick!—a Scotch mist is a joke to them. Unusual all this, captain. You know *our* rain in Jamaica usually descends in bucketsful, unless it be regularly set in for a week, and then, but then only, it becomes what in England we are in the habit of calling a *soaking* rain. One good thing, however,—while it descends so quietly, the earth will absorb it all, and that furious river will not continue swollen.”

“Probably not,” said I.

“Mr Cringle,” said the skipper, “do you mark that tree on the ridge of the mountain, that large tree in such conspicuous relief against the eastern sky?”

“I do, captain. But—heaven help us!—what necromancy is this! It seems to sink into the mountain-top—why, I only see the uppermost branches now. It has disappeared, and yet the outline of the hill is as distinct and well defined as ever; I can even see the cattle on the ridge, although they are running about in a very incomprehensible way, certainly.”

“Hush!” said Don Ricardo, “hush!—the *padre* is reading the funeral service in the chapel, preparatory to the body being brought out.”

And so he was. But a low grumbling noise, gradually increasing, was now distinctly audible. The monk hurried on with the prescribed form—he finished it—and we were about moving the body to carry it forth—Bang and I being in the very act of stooping down to lift the bier, when the captain sung out sharp and quick,—“Here, Tom!”—the urgency of the appeal abolishing the *Mister*—“Here!—zounds, the whole hill-side is in motion!” And as he spoke, I beheld the negro village, that hung on the opposite bank, gradually fetch way, houses, trees, and all, with a loud, harsh, grating sound.

“God defend us!” I involuntarily exclaimed.

“Stand clear,” shouted the skipper; “the whole hill-side opposite is under weigh, and we shall be bothered here presently.”

He was right—the entire face of the hill over against us was by this time in motion, sliding over the substratum of rock like a first-rate gliding along the well-greased *ways* at launching—an *earthly* avalanche. Presently the rough, rattling, and crashing sound, from the disrapture of the soil, and the breaking of the branches, and tearing

up by the roots of the largest trees, gave warning of some tremendous incident. The lights in the huts still burned, but houses and all continued to slide down the declivity ; and anon a loud startled exclamation was heard here and there, and then a pause, but the low mysterious hurtling sound never ceased.

At length a loud continuous yell echoed along the hill-side. The noise increased—the rushing sound came stronger and stronger—the river rose higher, and roared louder ; it overleaped the lintel of the door—the fire on the floor hissed for a moment, and then expired in smouldering wreaths of white smoke—the discoloured torrent gurgled into the chapel, and reached the altar-piece ; and while the cries from the hill-side were highest, and bitterest, and most despairing, it suddenly filled the chapel to the top of the low door-post ; and although the large tapers which had been lit near the altar-piece were as yet unextinguished, like meteors sparkling on a troubled sea, all was misery and consternation.

“Have patience, and be composed, now,” shouted Don Ricardo. “If it increases, we can escape through the apertures here, behind the altar-piece, and from thence to the high ground beyond. The heavy rain has loosened the soil on the opposite bank, and it has slid into the river-course, negro houses and all. But be composed, my dears—nothing supernatural in all this ; and rest assured, although the river has unquestionably been forced from its channel, that there is no danger, if you will only maintain your self-possession.”

And there we were—an inhabitant of a cold climate cannot go along with me in the description. We were all alarmed, but we were not *chilled*—cold is a great daunter of bravery. At New Orleans, the black regiments, in the heat of the forenoon, were really the most efficient



corps of the army ; but in the morning, when the hoar-frost was on the long wire-grass, they were but as a broken reed. “Him too *cool* for *brave* to-day,” said the sergeant of the grenadier company of the West India regiment, which was brigaded in the ill-omened advance, when we attacked New Orleans ; but here, having heat, and seeing none of the women egregiously alarmed, we all took heart of grace, and really there was no quailing amongst us.

Señora Campana and her two nieces, Señora Cangrejo and her angelic daughter, had all betaken themselves to a sort of seat, enclosing the altar in a semicircle, with the peas-soup-coloured water up to their knees. Not a word—not an exclamation of fear escaped from them, although the gushing eddies from the open door showed that the soil from the opposite hill was fast settling down, and usurping the former channel of the river.

“All very fine this to read of,” at last exclaimed Aaron Bang. “Zounds, we shall be drowned. Look out, Transom ; Tom Cringle, look out ; for my part, I shall dive through the door, and take my chance.”

“No use in that,” said Don Ricardo ; “the two round openings there at the west end of the chapel, open on a dry shelf, from which the ground slopes easily upward to the house ; let us put the ladies through them, and then we males can shift for ourselves as we best may.”

At this moment the water rose so high, that the bier on which the corpse of poor Maria Olivera lay stark and stiff, was floated off the trestles, and turning on its edge, after glancing for a moment in the light cast by the wax tapers, it sunk into the thick brown water, and was no more seen.

The old priest murmured a prayer, but the effect on us was electric. “*Sauve qui peut*,” was now the cry ;

and Sneezer, quite in his element, began to cruise all about, threatening the tapers with instant extinction.

"Ladies, get through the holes," shouted Don Ricardo. "Captain, get you out first."

"Can't desert my ship," said the gallant fellow; "the last to quit where danger is, my dear sir. It is my charter; but, Mr Cringle, go you, and hand the ladies out."

"Indeed I will not," said I. "Beg pardon, sir; I simply mean to say, that I cannot usurp the *pas* from you."

"Then," quoth Don Ricardo—a more discreet personage than any one of us—"I will go myself;" and forthwith he screwed himself through one of the round holes in the wall behind the altar-piece. "Give me out one of the wax tapers—there is no wind now," said Don Ricardo; "and hand out my wife, Captain Transom."

"*Ave Maria!*" said the matron, "I shall never get through that hole."

"Try, my dear madam," said Bang, for by this time we were all deucedly alarmed at our situation. "Try, madam; and we lifted her towards the hole—fairly entered her into it, head foremost, and all was smooth, till a certain part of the excellent woman's earthly tabernacle stuck fast.

We could hear her invoking all the saints in the calendar on the outside to "make her *thin*;" but the flesh and muscle were obdurate—through she would not go, until—delicacy being now blown to the winds—Captain Transom placed his shoulder to the old lady's extremity, and with a regular "Oh, heave oh!" shot her through the aperture into her husband's arms. The young ladies we ejected much more easily, although Francesca Cangrejo did stick a little too. The priest was next passed, then Don Picador; and so we went on, until in rotation

we had all made our exit, and were perched shivering on the high bank. God defend us! we had not been a minute there when the rushing of the stream increased—the rain once more fell in torrents—several large trees came down with a fearful impetus in the roaring torrent, and struck the corner of the chapel. It shook—we could see the small cross on the eastern gable tremble. Another stump surged against it—it gave way—and in a minute afterwards there was not a vestige remaining of the whole fabric.

“What a funeral for thee, Maria!” said Don Ricardo.  
*Not a vestige of the body was ever found.*

There was nothing now for it. We all stopped, and turned, and looked—there was not a stone of the building to be seen—all was red precipitous bank, or dark flowing river—so we turned our steps towards the house. The sun by this time had risen. We found the northern range of rooms still entire, so we made the most of it; and, by dint of the captain’s and my nautical skill, before dinner-time, there was rigged a canvass jury-roof over the southern part of the fabric, and we were once more seated in comparative comfort at our meal. But it was all melancholy work enough. However, at last we retired to our beds; and next morning, when I awoke, *there* was the small stream once more trickling over the face of the rock, with the slight spray wafting into my bedroom, a little discoloured certainly, but as quietly as if no storm had taken place.

We were kept at Don Picador’s for three days, as, from the shooting of the soil from the opposite hill, the river had been dammed up, and its channel altered, so that there was no venturing across. Three negroes were unfortunately drowned, when the bank *shot*, as Bang called it. But the wonder passed away; and by nine

o'clock on the fourth morning, when we mounted our mules to proceed, there was little apparently on the fair face of nature to mark that such fearful scenes had been. However, when we did get under weigh, we found that the hurricane had not passed over us without leaving fearful evidences of its violence.

We had breakfasted—the women had wept—Don Ricardo had blown his nose—Aaron Bang had blundered and fidgeted about—and the *bestias* were at the door. We embraced the ladies.

“My son,” said Señora Cangrejo, “we shall most likely never meet again. You have your country to go to—you have a mother. Oh, may she never suffer the pangs which have wrung my heart! But I know—I know that she never will.” I bowed. “We may never—indeed, in all likelihood we shall never meet again!” continued she, in a rich, deep-toned, mellow voice; “but if your way of life should ever lead you to Cordova, you will be sure of having many visitors, and many a door will open to you, if you will but give out that you have shown kindness to Maria Olivera, or to any one connected with her.” She wept—and bent over me, pressing both her hands on the crown of my head. “May that great God, who careth not for rank or station, for nation or for country, bless you, my son—bless you!”

All this was sorry work. She kissed me on the forehead, and turned away. Her daughter was standing close to her, “like Niobe, all tears.” “Farewell, Mr Cringle—may you be happy!” I kissed her hand—she turned to the captain. He looked inexpressible things, and taking her hand, held it to his breast; and then, making a slight genuflection, pressed it to his lips. He appeared to be amazingly energetic, and she seemed to struggle to be released. He recovered himself, however—made a solemn

bow—the ladies vanished. We shook hands with old Don Picador, mounted our mules, and bid a last adieu to the *Valley of the Hurricane*.

We ambled along for some time in silence. At length the skipper dropped astern, until he got alongside of me. "I say, Tom"—I was well aware that he never called me *Tom* unless he was *fou*, or his heart was full, honest man—"Tom, what think you of Francesca Cangrejo?"

Oh ho! sits the wind in that quarter? thought I. "Why, I don't know, captain—I have seen her to disadvantage—so much misery—fine woman though—rather large to *my* taste—but"—

"Confound your *buts*," quoth the captain. "But never mind—push on, push on."—I may tell the gentle reader in his ear, that the worthy fellow, at the moment when I send this chapter to the press, has his flag, and that Francesca Cangrejo is no less a personage than his wife.

However, let us get along. "Doctor Pavo Real," said Don Ricardo, "now since you have been good enough to spare us a day, let us get the heart of your secret out of you. Why, you must have been pretty well frightened on the island there."

"Never so much frightened in my life, Don Ricardo; that English captain is a most *tempestuous* man—but all has ended well; and after having seen you to the crossing, I will bid you good-by."

"Poo—nonsense. Come along—here is the English *medico*, your brother Esculapius; so, come along, you can return in the morning."

"But the sick folk in Santiago"—

"Will be none the sicker for your absence, Doctor Pavo Real," responded Don Ricardo.

The little doctor laughed, and away we all cantered—

Don Ricardo leading, followed by his wife and nieces, on three stout mules, sitting, not on side-saddles, but on a kind of chair, with a foot-board on the larboard side to support the feet—then followed the two *Galens*, and little Reefpoint, while the captain and I brought up the rear. We had not proceeded five hundred yards, when we were brought to a stand-still by a mighty tree, which had been thrown down by the wind fairly across the road. On the right hand there was a perpendicular rock rising up to a height of five hundred feet; and on the left an equally precipitous descent, without either ledge or parapet to prevent one from falling over. What was to be done? We could not by any exertion of strength remove the tree; and if we sent back for assistance, it would have been a work of time. So we dismounted, got the ladies to alight, and Aaron Bang, Transom, and myself, like true knights-errant, undertook to ride the *mulos* over the stump.

Aaron Bang led gallantly, and made a deuced good jump of it—Transom followed, and made not quite so clever an exhibition—I then rattled at it, and down came mule and rider. However, we were accounted for on the right side.

“But what shall become of *us*?” shouted the English doctor.

“And as for me, *I* shall return,” said the Spanish *medico*.

“Lord love you, no,” said little Reefpoint; “here, lash me to my beast, and no fear.” The doctor made him fast, as desired, round the mule’s neck with a stout thong, and then drove him at the barricade, and over they came, man and beast, although, to tell the truth, little Reefy alighted well out on the neck, with a hand grasping each



ear. However, he was a gallant little fellow, and in no-wise discouraged, so he undertook to bring over the other quadrupeds; and in little more than a quarter of an hour we were all under weigh on the opposite side, in full sail towards Don Ricardo's property. But as we proceeded up the valley, the destruction caused by the storm became more and more apparent. Trees were strewn about in all directions, having been torn up by the roots—road there was literally none; and by the time we reached the coffee estate, after a ride, or scramble, more properly speaking, of three hours, we were all pretty much tired. In some places the road at the best was but a rocky shelf of limestone not exceeding twelve inches in width, where, if you had slipped, down you would have gone a thousand feet. At this time it was white and clean, as if it had been newly chiselled, all the soil and sand having been washed away by the recent heavy rains.

The situation was beautiful; the house stood on a platform scarped out of the hillside, with a beautiful view of the whole country down to St Jago. The accommodation was good; more comforts, more English comforts, in the mansion than I had yet seen in Cuba; and as it was built with solid slabs of limestone, and roofed with strong hard-wood timbers and rafters, and tiled, it had sustained comparatively little injury, having the advantage of being at the same time sheltered by the overhanging cliff. It stood in the middle of a large platform of hard sundried clay, plastered over, and as white as chalk, which extended about forty feet from the eaves of the house, in every direction, on which the coffee was cured. This platform was surrounded on all sides by the greenest grass I had ever seen, and overshadowed, not the house alone, but the whole level space, by one vast wild fig-tree.

“ I say, Tom, do you see that Scotchman hugging the Creole, eh ? ”

“ Scotchman ! ” said I, looking towards Don Ricardo, who certainly did not appear to be particularly amorous ; on the contrary, we had just alighted, and the worthy man was enacting groom.

“ Yes,” continued Bang, “ the Scotchman hugging the Creole ; look at that tree—do you see the trunk of it ? ”

I did look at it. It was a magnificent cedar, with a tall straight stem, covered over with a curious sort of fret-work, wove by the branches of some strong parasitical plant, which had warped itself round and round it, by numberless snakelike convolutions, as if it had been a vegetable Laocoon. The tree itself shot up branchless to the uncommon height of fifty feet ; the average girth of the trunk being four-and-twenty feet, or eight feet in diameter. The leaf of the cedar is small, not unlike the ash ; but when I looked up, I noticed that the feelers of this ligneous serpent had twisted round the larger boughs, and blended their broad leaves with those of the tree, so that it looked like two trees grafted into one ; but, as Aaron Bang said, in a very few years the cedar would entirely disappear, its growth being impeded, its pith extracted, and its core rotted, by the baleful embraces of the wild fig, of “ *this Scotchman hugging the Creole.* ” After we had fairly shaken into our places, there was every promise of a very pleasant visit. Our host had a tolerable cellar, and although there was not much of style in his establishment, still there was a fair allowance of comfort, every thing considered. The evening after we arrived was most beautiful. The house, situated on its white plateau of *barbiques*, as the coffee platforms are called, where large piles of the berries in their red cherrylike

husks had been blackening in the sun the whole forenoon, and on which a gang of negroes was now employed covering them up with tarpaulings for the night, stood in the centre of an amphitheatre of mountains, the front box, as it were, the stage part opening on a bird's-eye-view of the distant town and harbour, with the everlasting ocean beyond it, the currents and flaws of wind making its surface look like ice, as we were too distant to discern the heaving of the swell, or the motion of the billows. The fast falling shades of evening were deepened by the sombrous shadow of the immense tree overhead, and all down in the deep valley was now becoming dark and undistinguishable, through the blue vapours that were gradually floating up towards us. To the left, on the shoulder of the Horseshoe Hill, the sunbeams still lingered, and the gigantic shadows of the trees on the right hand prong were strongly cast across the valley on a red precipitous bank near the top of it. The sun was descending beyond the wood, flashing through the branches, as if they had been on fire. He disappeared. It was a most lovely still evening—the air—but hear the skipper—

“ It is the hour when from the boughs  
The nightingale's high note is heard ;  
It is the hour when lovers' vows  
Seem sweet in every whisper'd word ;  
And gentle winds and waters near,  
Make music to the lonely ear.  
Each flower the dews have lightly wet,  
And in the sky the stars are met,  
And on the wave is deeper blue,  
And on the leaf is browner hue,  
And in the heaven that clear obscure,  
So softly dark, and darkly pure,  
Which follows the decline of day,  
When twilight melts beneath the moon away.”

“ Well recited, skipper,” shouted Bang. “ Given as the noble poet’s verses should be given. I did not know the extent of your accomplishments ; grown poetical ever since you saw Francesca Cangrejo, eh ? ”

The darkness hid the gallant captain’s blushes, if blush he did.

“ I say, Don Ricardo, who are those ? ”—half-a-dozen well-clad negroes had approached the house by this time—“ Ask them, Mr Bang ; take your friend Mr Cringle for an interpreter.”

“ Well, I will. Tom, who are they ? Ask them—do.”

I put the question, “ Do you belong to the property ? ”

The foremost, a handsome negro, answered me, “ No, we don’t, sir ; at least, not till to-morrow.”

“ Not till to-morrow ? ”

“ No, sir ; *sòmos caballeros hoy*,” (we are gentlemen to-day.)

“ Gentlemen to-day ; and, pray, what shall you be to-morrow ? ”

“ *Esclavos otra ves*,” (slaves again, sir,) rejoined the poor fellow, nowise daunted.

“ And you, my darling,” said I to a nice well-dressed girl, who seemed to be the sister of the spokesman, “ what are you to-day, may I ask ? ”

She laughed—“ *Esclava*, a slave to-day, but to-morrow I shall be free.”

“ Very strange.”

“ Not at all señor ; there are six of us in a family, and one of us is free each day, all to father there,” pointing to an old greyheaded negro, who stood by, leaning on his staff—“ he is free two days in the week ; and as I am going to have a child,”—a cool admission,—“ I want

to buy another day for myself too—but Don Ricardo will tell you all about it.”

The Don by this time chimed in, talking kindly to the poor creatures ; but we had to retire, as dinner was now announced, to which we sat down.

Don Ricardo had been altogether Spanish in Santiago, because he lived there amongst Spaniards, and every thing was Spanish about him ; so with the *tact* of his countrymen he had gradually merged into the society in which he moved, and having married a very high caste Spanish lady, he at length became regularly amalgamated with the community. But here, in his mountain retreat, sole master, his slaves in attendance on him, he was once more an Englishman, in externals, as he always was at heart, and Richie Cloche, from the Lang Toon of Kirkaldy, shone forth in all his glory as the kind-hearted landlord. His head household servant was an English, or rather a Jamaica negro ; his equipment, so far as the dinner *set out* was concerned, was pure English ; he would not even speak any thing but English himself.

The entertainment was exceedingly good,—the only thing that puzzled us uninitiated subjects, was a fricassee of Macaca worms, that is, the worm which breeds in the rotten trunk of the cotton tree, a beautiful little insect, as big as a miller’s thumb, with a white trunk and a black head—in one word, a gigantic caterpillar.

Bang fed thereon—he had been accustomed to it in Jamaica in some Creole families where he visited, he said—but it was beyond my compass. However, all this while we were having a great deal of fun, when Señora Campana addressed her husband—“ My dear, you are now in your English mood, so I suppose we must go.” We had dined at six, and it might now be about eight. Don Ricardo, with all the complacency in the world,

bowed, as much as to say, "you are right, my dear, you *may* go," when his youngest niece addressed him.

"*Tio*—my uncle," said she, in a low silver-toned voice, "Juana and I have brought our guitars"——

"Not another word to be said," quoth Transom—"the guitars by all means."

The girls in an instant, without any preparatory blushing, or other botheration, rose, slipped their heads and right arms through the black ribbons that supported their instruments, and stepped into the middle of the room.

"*'The Moorish Maid of Granada,'*" said Señora Campana. They nodded.

"You shall take *Fernando the sailor's* part," said Señora Candalaria, the youngest sister, to Juana, "for your voice is deeper than mine, and I shall be Anna."

"Agreed," said Juana, with a lovely smile, and an arch twinkle of her eye towards me, and then launched forth in full tide, accompanying her sweet and mellow voice on that too much neglected instrument, the guitar. It was a wild, irregular sort of ditty, with one or two startling *arabesque* bursts in it. As near as may be, the following conveys the meaning, but not the poetry.

#### THE MOORISH MAID OF GRANADA.

##### FERNANDO.

"The setting moon hangs over the hill ;  
On the dark pure breast of the mountain lake  
Still trembles her greenish silver *wake*,  
And the blue mist floats over the rill.  
And the cold streaks of dawning appear,  
Giving token that sunrise is near ;  
And the fast clearing east is flushing,  
And the watery clouds are blushing ;



And the day-star is sparkling on high,  
Like the fire of my Anna's dark eye.

“ The ruby-red clouds in the east  
Float like islands upon the sea,  
When the winds are asleep on its breast ;  
Ah, would that such calm were for me !

“ And see, the first streamer-like ray  
From the unrisen god of day,  
Is piercing the ruby-red clouds,  
Shooting up like golden shrouds :  
And like silver gauze falls the shower,  
Leaving diamonds on bank, bush, and bower,  
Amidst many an unopened flower.

Why walks the dark maid of Granada ? ”

ANNA.

“ At evening when labour is done,  
And cool'd in the sea is the sun ;  
And the dew sparkles clear on the rose,  
And the flowers are beginning to close,  
Which at nightfall again in the calm  
Their incense to God breathe in balm ;  
And the bat flickers up in the sky,  
And the beetle hums moaningly by ;  
And to rest in the brake speeds the deer,  
While the nightingale sings loud and clear.

“ Scorched by the heat of the sun's fierce light,  
The sweetest flowers are bending most  
Upon their slender stems ;  
More faint are they than if tempest tost,  
Till they drink of the sparkling gems  
That fall from the eye of night.

“ Hark ! from lattices guitars are tinkling,  
And though in heaven the stars are twinkling,  
No tell-tale moon looks over the mountain,  
To peer at her pale cold face in the fountain ;

And serenader's mellow voice,  
Wailing of war, or warbling of love,—  
Of love, while the melting maid of his choice  
Leans out from her bower above.

“ All is soft and yielding towards night,  
When blending darkness shrouds all from the sight,  
But chaste, chaste, is this cold, pure light,  
Sang the Moorish maid of Granada.”

After the song, we all applauded, and the ladies having made their *congrés*, retired. The captain and I looked towards Aaron Bang and Don Ricardo; they were tooth and nail at something which we could not understand. So we wisely held our tongues.

“ Very strange all this,” quoth Bang.

“ Not at all,” said Ricardo. “ As I tell you, every slave here can have himself or herself appraised, at any time they may choose, with liberty to purchase their freedom day by day.”

“ But that would be compulsory manumission,” quoth Bang.

“ And if it be,” said Ricardo, “ what then? The scheme works well *here*—why should it not do so *there*—I mean with you, who have so many advantages over us?”

This is an unentertaining subject to most people, but having no bias myself, I have considered it but justice to insert in my log the following letter, which Bang, honest fellow, addressed to me, some years after the time I speak of.

“ MY DEAR CRINGLE,

“ Since I last saw you in London, it is nearly, but not quite, three years ago. I considered at the time we

parted, that if I lived at the rate of L.3000 a-year, I was not spending one-half of my average income, and on the faith of this I did plead guilty to my house in Park Lane, and a carriage for my wife,—and, in short, I spent my L.3000 a-year. Where am I now? In the old shop at Mammee Gully—my two eldest daughters, little things, in the very middle of their education, hastily ordered out, shipped as it were, like two bales of goods to Jamaica—my eldest nephew, whom I had adopted, obliged to exchange from the —— Light Dragoons, and to enter a foot regiment, *receiving* the difference, which but cleared him from his mess accounts. But the world says I was extravagant. Like Timon, however—no, d—n Timon—I spent money when I thought I had it, and therein I did no more than the Duke of Bedford, or Lord Grosvenor, or many another worthy peer; and now when I no longer have it, why, I cut my coat by my cloth, have made up my mind to perpetual banishment here, and I owe no man a farthing.

“ But all this is wandering from the subject. We are now asked in direct terms to free our slaves. I will not even glance at the injustice of this demand, the horrible infraction of rights that it would lead to; all this I will leave untouched; but, my dear fellow, were men in your service or the army to do us justice, each in his small sphere in England, how much good might you not do us! Officers of rank are, of all others, the most influential witnesses we could adduce, if they, like you, have had opportunities of judging for themselves. But I am rambling from my object. You may remember our *escapade* into Cuba, a thousand years ago, when you were a lieutenant of the Firebrand. Well, you may also remember Don Ricardo’s doctrine regarding the gradual emancipation of the negroes, and how we saw his plan in full ope-

ration—at least I did, for you knew little of these matters. Well, last year I made a note of what then passed, and sent it to an eminent West India merchant in London, who had it published in the *Courier*, but it did not seem to please either one party or the other; a signal proof, one would have thought, that there was some good in it. At a later period, I requested the same gentleman to have it published in *Blackwood*, where it would at least have had a fair trial on its own merits, but it was refused insertion. My very worthy friend, \* \* \* who acted for old Kit at that time as secretary of state for colonial affairs, did not like it, I presume; it trenched a little, it would seem, on the integrity of his great question; it approached to something like *compulsory manumission*, about which he *does* rave. Why will he not think on this subject like a Christian man? The country—I say so—*will never sanction the retaining in bondage of any slave, who is willing to pay his master his fair appraised value.*

“Our friend \* \* \* injures *us*, and himself too, a *leetle* by his ultra notions. However, hear what I propose, and what, as I have told you formerly, was published in the *Courier* by no less a man than Lord ——

“ ‘ *Scheme for the gradual Abolition of Slavery.*

“ ‘ The following scheme of redemption for the slaves in our colonies is akin to a practice that prevails in some of the Spanish settlements.

“ ‘ We have now bishops, (a most excellent measure,) and we may presume that the inferior clergy will be much more efficient than heretofore. It is therefore proposed,—That every slave, on attaining the age of twenty-one years, should be, by act of Parliament, competent to apply to his parish clergyman, and signify his desire to

be appraised. The clergyman's business would then be to select two respectable appraisers from amongst his parishioners, who should value the slave, calling in an umpire if they disagreed.

“ ‘ As men even of good principles will often be more or less swayed by the peculiar interests of the body to which they belong, the rector should be instructed, if he saw any flagrant swerving from an honest appraisement, to notify the same to his bishop, who, by application to the governor, if need were, could thereby rectify it. When the slave was thus valued, the valuation should be registered by the rector, in a book to be kept for that purpose, an attested copy of which should be annually lodged amongst the archives of the colony.

“ ‘ We shall assume a case, where a slave is valued for L.120, Jamaica currency. He soon, by working *by-hours*, selling the produce of his provision grounds, &c., acquires L.20; and how easily and frequently this is done, every one knows, who is at all acquainted with West India affairs.

“ ‘ He then *shall have a right* to pay to his owner this L.20 as the price of *his Monday for ever*, and his owner shall be bound to receive it. A similar sum would purchase him his freedom on Tuesday; and other four instalments, to use a West India phrase, would *buy him free* altogether. You will notice, I consider that he is already free on the Sunday. Now, where is the insurmountable difficulty here? The planter may be put to inconvenience, certainly, great inconvenience, but *he has compensation*, and the slave *has his freedom—if he deserves it*; and as his emancipation in nine cases out of ten would be a work of time, he would, as he approached absolute freedom, become more civilized, that is, more fit to be free; and as he became more civilized, new wants would spring up, so

that when he was finally free, he would not be content to work a day or two in the week for subsistence merely. He would work the whole six to buy many little comforts, which, *as a slave suddenly emancipated, he never would have thought of.*

“ ‘ As the slave becomes free, I would have his owner’s allowance of provisions and clothing decrease gradually.

“ ‘ It may be objected—“suppose slaves partly free, to be taken in execution, and sold for debt.” I answer, let them be so. Why cannot three days of a man’s labour be sold by the deputy-marshal as well as six ?

“ ‘ Again—“Suppose the gang is mortgaged, or liable to *judgments* against the owner of it.” I still answer, let it be so—only, in this case let the slave pay his instalments into court, in place of paying them to his owners, and let him apply to his rector for information in such a case.

“ ‘ By the register I would have kept, every one could at once see what property an owner had in his gang—that is, how many were actually slaves, and how many were in progress of becoming free. *Thus well-disposed and industrious slaves would soon become freemen. But the idle and worthless would still continue slaves, and why the devil shouldn’t they ?* (Signed) A. B——.’ ”

There does seem to be a rough, yet vigorous sound sense in all this. But I take leave of the subject, which I do not profess to understand, only I am willing to bear witness in favour of my old friends, so far as I can, conscientiously.

We returned next day to Santiago, and had then to undergo the bitterness of parting. With me it was a slight affair, but the skipper!—However, I will not dwell on it. We reached the town towards evening. The



women were ready to weep, I saw; but we all turned in, and next morning at breakfast we were moved, I will admit—some more, some less. Little Reefy, poor fellow, was crying like a child; indeed he was little more, being barely fifteen.

“Oh! Mr Cringle, I wish I had never seen Miss *Candalaria de los Dolores*; indeed I do.”

This was Don Ricardo's youngest niece.

“Ah, Reefy, Reefy,” said I, “you must make haste, and be made post, and *then*”——

“What does he call her?” said Aaron.

“*Señora Tomassa Candalaria de los Dolores Gonzales y Vallejo*,” blubbered out little Reefy.

“What a complicated piece of machinery she must be!” gravely rejoined Bang.

The meal was protracted to a very unusual length, but time and tide wait for no man. We rose. Aaron Bang advanced to make his bow to our kind hostess; he held out his hand, but she, to Aaron's great surprise apparently, pushed it on one side, and regularly closing with our friend, hugged him in right earnest. I have before mentioned that she was a very small woman; so, as the devil would have it, the golden pin in her hair was thrust into Aaron's eye, which made him jump back, wherein he lost his balance, and away he went, dragging Madama Campana down on the top of him. However, none of us could laugh *now*; we parted, jumped into our boat, and proceeded straight to the anchorage, where three British merchantmen were by this time riding, all ready for sea. We got on board. “Mr Yerk,” said the captain, “fire a gun, and hoist blue Peter at the fore. Loose the foretopsail.” The masters came on board for their instructions; we passed but a melancholy evening of it, and next morning I took my last look of Santiago de Cuba.

## CHAPTER IV.

THE CRUISE OF THE WAVE—THE ACTION WITH THE  
SLAVER.

“ O’er the glad waters of the dark blue sea,  
Our thoughts as boundless, and our souls as free.  
Far as the breeze can bear the billow’s foam,  
Survey our empire, and behold our home,  
These are our realms, no limits to their sway—  
Our flag the sceptre all who meet obey.”

*The Corsair.*

At three o’clock next morning, about an hour and a half before daydawn, I was roused from my cot by the gruff voice of the boatswain on deck—“ All hands up anchor.”

The next moment the gunroom steward entered with a lantern, which he placed on the table—“ Gentlemen, all hands up anchor, if you please.”

“ Botheration !” grumbled one.

“ Oh dear !” yawned another.

“ How merrily we live that sailors be !” sung a third in a most doleful strain, and in all the bitterness of heart consequent on being roused out of a warm nest so unceremoniously. But no help for it ; so up we all got, and opening the door of my berth, I got out, and sat me down on the bench that ran along the starboard side of the table.

For the benefit of the uninitiated, let me describe a

gunroom on board of a sloop of war. Everybody knows that the captain's cabin occupies the after part of the ship ; next to it, on the same deck, is the gunroom. In a corvette, such as the *Firebrand*, it is a room, as near as may be, twenty feet long by twelve wide, and lighted by a long scuttle, or skylight, in the deck above. On each side of this room runs a row of small chambers, seven feet long by six feet wide, boarded off from the main saloon, or, in nautical phrase, separated from it by bulkheads, each with a door and small window opening into the same, and, generally speaking, with a small scuttle in the side of the ship towards the sea. These are the officers' sleeping apartments, in which they have each a chest of drawers and basin-stand ; while overhead is suspended a cot, or hammock, kept asunder by a wooden frame, six feet long by about two broad, slung from cleats nailed to the beams above, by two lanyards fastened to rings, one at the head, and the other at the foot ; from which radiate a number of smaller cords, which are fastened to the canvass of the cot ; while a small strip of canvass runs from head to foot on each side, so as to prevent the sleeper from rolling out. The dimensions of the gunroom are, as will be seen, very much circumscribed by the side berths ; and when you take into account, that the centre is occupied by a long table, running the whole length of the room, flanked by a wooden bench, with a high back to it, on each side, and a large clumsy chair at the head, and another at the foot, not forgetting the sideboard at the head of the table, (full of knives, forks, spoons, tumblers, glasses, &c. &c. &c., stuck into mahogany sockets,) all of which are made fast to the deck by strong cleats and staples, and bands of spunyarn, so as to prevent them fetching way, or moving, when the vessel pitches or rolls, you will understand that

there is no great scope to expatiate upon, free of the table, benches, and bulkheads of the cabins. While I sat monopolizing the dull light of the lantern, and accoutring myself as decently as the hurry would admit of, I noticed the officers, in their night-gowns and night-caps, as they extricated themselves from their coops ; and picturesque-looking subjects enough there were amongst them, in all conscience. At length, that is in about ten minutes from the time we were called, we were all at stations—a gun was fired, and we weighed, and then stood out to sea, running along about four knots, with the land-wind right aft. Having made an offing of three miles or so, we outran the *terral*, and got becalmed in the belt of smooth water between it and the sea-breeze. It was striking to see the three merchant-ships gradually draw out from the land, until we were all clustered together in a bunch, with half a gale of wind curling the blue waves within musket-shot, while all was long swell and smooth water with us. At length the breeze reached us, and we made sail with our convoy to the southward and eastward, the lumbering merchantmen crowding every inch of canvass, while we could hardly keep astern, under close-reefed topsails, foresail, jib, and spanker.

“ Pipe to breakfast,” said the captain to Mr Yerk.

“ A sail a-beam of us to windward ! ”

“ What is she ? ” sung out the skipper to the man at the masthead who had hailed.

“ A small schooner, sir ; she has fired a gun, and hoisted an ensign and pennant.”

“ How is she steering ? ”

“ She has edged away for us, sir.”

“ Very well.—Mr Yerk, make the signal for the convoy to stand on.—Have the men gone to breakfast ? ”

“ No, sir, but they are just going.”

“ Then pipe belay with breakfast for a minute. All hands make sail, if you please. Crack on, Mr Yerk, and let us overhaul this small swaggerer.”

In a trice we had all sail set, and were staggering along on the larboard tack, close upon a wind. We hauled out from the merchant-ships like smoke, and presently the schooner was seen from the deck. About this time it fell nearly calm.—“ Go to breakfast now.” The crew disappeared, all to the officers, man at the helm, quartermaster at the conn, and signalman.

The first lieutenant had the book open on the drum of the capstan before him. “ Make our number,” said the captain. It was done. “ What does she answer?”

The signalman answered from the fore-rigging, where he had perched himself with his glass—“ She makes the signal to telegraph, sir—3, 9, 2, at the fore, sir”—and so on; which translated was simply this—“ The Wave, with despatches from the admiral.”

“ Oh, ho,” said Transom; “ What is she sent for? Whenever the people have got their breakfast, tack, and stand towards her, Mr Yerk.”

The little vessel approached—“ Shorten sail, Mr Yerk, and heave the ship to,” said the captain to the first lieutenant.

“ Ay, ay, sir.”

“ All hands, Mr Catwell.”

Presently the boatswain's whistle rung sharp and clear, while his gruff voice, to which his mates bore any thing but mellow burdens, echoed through the ship—“ All hands shorten sail—fore and mainsails haul up—haul down the jib—in topgallant sails—now back the main-topsail.”

By heaving-to, we brought the Wave on our weather

bow. She was now within a cable's length of the corvette; the captain was standing on the second foremost gun, on the larboard side. "Mafame,"—to his steward,—“hand me up my trumpet.” He hailed the little vessel—“Ho, the Wave, ahoy!”

Presently the responding “hillo” came down the wind to us from the officer in command of her, like an echo—“Run under our stern and heave-to, to leeward.”

“Ay, ay, sir.”

As the Wave came to the wind, she lowered down her boat, and Mr Jigmaree, the boatswain of the dockyard in Jamaica, came on board, and, touching his hat, presented his despatches to the captain. Presently he and the skipper retired into the cabin, and all hands were inspecting the Wave in her new character of one of his Britannic Majesty's cruisers. When I had last seen her she was a most beautiful little craft, both in hull and rigging, as ever delighted the eye of a sailor; but the dockyard riggers and carpenters had fairly bedeviled her, at least so far as appearances went. First, they had replaced the light rail on her gunwale, by heavy solid bulwarks four feet high, surmounted by hammock nettings, at least another foot, so that the symmetrical little vessel, that formerly floated on the foam light as a seagull, now looked like a clumsy dish-shaped Dutch dogger. Her long slender wands of masts, which used to swig about, as if there were neither shrouds nor stays to support them, were now as taught and stiff as church steeples, with four heavy shrouds of a side, and stays and back-stays, and the Devil knows what all.

“Now,” quoth Tailtackle, “if them *heave'emtaughts* at the yard have not taken the speed out of the little beauty, I am a Dutchman.” Timotheus, I may state in the bygoing, was not a Dutchman; but his opinion



was sound, and soon verified to my cost. Jigmaree now approached.

“ The captain wants you in the cabin, sir,” said he.

I descended, and found the skipper seated at a table with his clerk beside him, and several open letters lying before him. “ Sit down, Mr Cringle.” I took a chair. “ There—read that,” and he threw an open letter across the table to me, which ran as follows :—

“ SIR,

“ The Vice-Admiral, commanding on the Jamaica station, desires me to say, that the bearer, the boatswain of the dockyard, Mr Luke Jigmaree, has instructions to cruise for, and if possible to fall in with you, before you weather Cape Maize, and falling in with you, to deliver up charge of the vessel to you, as well as of the five negroes, and the pilot, Peter Mangrove, who are on board of her. The Wave having been armed and fitted with every thing considered necessary, you are to man her with thirty-five of your crew, including officers, and to place her under the command of Lieut. Thomas Cringle, who is to be furnished with a copy of this letter authenticated by your signature, and to whom you will give written instructions, that he is, first of all, to cruise in the great Cuba channel, until the 14th proximo, for the prevention of piracy, and the suppression of the slave trade carried on between the island of Cuba and the coast of Africa, and to detain and carry into Havanna, or Nassau, New Providence, all vessels having slaves on board, which he may have reason to believe have been shipped beyond the prescribed limits on the African coast, as specified in the margin ; and after the 14th he is to proceed direct to New Providence, if unsuccessful, there to land Mr Jigmaree, and the dockyard negroes, and await your return

from the northward, after having seen the merchantmen clear of the Caicos passage. When you have rejoined the Wave at Nassau, you are to proceed with her as your tender to Crooked Island, and there to await instructions from the Vice-Admiral, which shall be transmitted by the packet to sail on the 9th proximo, to the care of the postmaster. I have the honour to be, sir, your obedient servant,

“ ————, Sec.

“ To the Hon. Captain Transom,

“ &c. &c. &c.”

To say sooth, I was by no means amorous of this independent command, as an idea had, at the time I speak of, gone abroad in the navy, that lieutenants commanding small vessels, seldom rose higher, unless through extraordinary interest, and I took the liberty of stating my repugnance to my captain.

He smiled, and threw over another letter to me ; it was a private one from the Admiral's Secretary, and was as follows :—

(*Confidential.*)

“ MY DEAR TRANSOM,

“ The Vice-Admiral has got a hint from Sir ———, to kick that wild splice, young Cringle, about a bit. It seems he is a nephew of Old Blueblazes, and as he has taken a fancy to the lad, he has promised his mother that he will do his utmost to give him opportunities of being knocked on the head, for all of which the old lady has professed herself wonderfully indebted. As the puppy has peculiar notions, hint, directly or indirectly, that he is not to be permanently bolted down to the little Wave, and that if half-a-dozen skippers (you, my darling, among

the rest) were to evaporate during the approaching hot months, he may have some small chance of t'other swab. Write me, and mind the claret and curaoa. Put no address on either ; and on coming to anchor, send notice to old Peterkin in the lodge at the Master Attendant's, and he will relieve you and the *pies de gallo*,\* some calm evening, of all farther trouble regarding *them*. Don't forget the turtle from Crooked Island, and the cigars.

“ Always, my dear Transom,

“ Yours sincerely,

“ ————.”

“ Oh, I forgot. The Admiral begs you will spare him some steady old hands to act as gunner, boatswain, &c. —elderly men, if you please, who will shorten sail before the squall strikes him. If you float him away with a crew of boys, the little scamp will get bothered, or cap-sized, in a jiffy. All this for your worship's government. How do you live with your passenger—prime fellow, an't he? My love to him. Lady ——— is dying to see him again.”

“ Well, Mr Cringle, what say you ? ”

“ Of course, I must obey, sir ;—highly flattered by Mr Secretary's good opinion, any how.” The captain laughed heartily.

“ It is nearly calm, I see. We must set about manning this seventy-four for you, without delay. So, come along, *Captain Cringle*.”

When we got on deck,—“ Hail the Wave to close, Mr

\* Customhouse officers, from the resemblance of the broad arrow, or mark of seizure, to the impression of a fowl's foot.

Yerk—I shall go in the yawl,” said Transom. “Lower away the boat, and pipe away the yawlers, boatswain’s mate,” quoth Yerk.

Presently the captain and I were on the Wave’s deck, where I was much surprised to find no less personages than Pepperpot Wagtail, and Paul Gelid, Esquires. Mr Gelid, a conch, or native of the Bahamas, was the same yawning, drawling, long-legged Creole as ever. He had been ill with fever, and had asked a passage to Nassau, where his brother was established. At bottom, however, he was an excellent fellow, warm-hearted, honourable, and upright. As for little Wagtail—oh, he was a delight!—a small round man, with all the Jamaica Creole irritability of temper, but also all the Jamaica warmth of heart about him—straightforward, and scrupulously conscientious in his dealings, but devoted to good cheer in every shape. He had also been ailing, and had adventured on the cruise in order to recruit. I scarcely know how to describe his figure better than by comparing his corpus to an egg, with his little feet stuck through the bottom of the shell; but he was amazingly active withal.

Both the captain and myself were rejoiced to see our old friends; and it was immediately fixed that they should go on board the corvette, and sling their cots alongside of Mr Bang, so long as the courses of the two vessels lay together. This being carried into execution, we set about our arrangements. Our precious blockheads at the dock-yard had fitted a thirty-two pound carronade on the pivot, and stuck two long sixes, one on each side of the little vessel. I hate carronades. I had, before now, seen thirty-two pound shot thrown by them jump off a ship’s side with a rebound like a football, when a shot from an eighteen-pounder long gun went crash, at the same range, through both sides of the ship, whipping off a leg and arm, or *aib-lins* a head or two, in its transit.

“ My dear sir,” said I, “ don’t shove me adrift with that old pot there—do lend me one of your long brass eighteen-pounders.”

“ Why, Master Cringle, what is your antipathy to carronades ?”

“ I have no absolute antipathy to them, sir—they are all very well in their way. For instance, I wish you would fit me with two twelve-pound carronades instead of those two popgun long sixes. These, with thirty muskets, and thirty-five men or so, would make me very complete.”

“ A modest request,” said Captain Transom.

“ Now, Tom Cringle, you have overshot your mark, my fine fellow,” thought I ; but it was all right, and that forenoon the cutter was hoisted out with the guns in her, and the others dismounted and sent back in exchange ; and in fine, after three days’ hard work, I took the command of H.B.M. schooner, Wave, with Timothy Tiltack as gunner, the senior midshipman as master, one of the carpenter’s crew as carpenter, and a boatswain’s-mate as boatswain, a surgeon’s mate as surgeon, the captain’s clerk as purser, and thirty foremast-men, besides the *blackies*, as the crew. But the sailing of the little beauty had been regularly spoiled. We could still in light winds weather on the corvette, it is true, but then she was a slow top, unless it blew half a gale of wind ; and as for going any thing free, why a sand barge would have beaten us.—We kept company with the Firebrand until we weathered Cape Maize. It was near five o’clock in the afternoon, the corvette was about half a mile on our lee-bow, when, while walking the deck, after an early dinner, Tiltack came up to me.

“ The Commodore has hove-to, sir.”

“ Very like,” said I ; “ to allow the merchant-ships to close, I presume.”

“ A gun,” said little Reefpoint. “ Ah—what signal now ? ”—It was the signal to close.

“ Put the helm up and run down to him,” said I. It was done—and presently the comfortable feeling of bowling along before the breeze, succeeded the sharp jerking digging motion of a little vessel, tearing and pitching through a head sea, close upon a wind. The water was buzzing under our bows, and we were once more close under the stern of the corvette. There was a boat alongside ready manned. The captain hailed, “ I send your orders on board, Mr Cringle, to bear up on your separate cruise.” At the same moment, the Firebrand’s ensign and pennant were hoisted—we did the same—a gun from the Commodore—ditto from the tidy little Wave—and lo ! Thomas Cringle, esquire, launched for the first time on his own bottom.

By this time the boat was alongside, with Messieurs Aaron Bang, Pepperpot Wagtail, and Paul Gelid—the former with his cot, and half-a-dozen cases of wine, and some pigs, and some poultry, all under the charge of his black servant.

“ Hillo,” said I—“ Mr Wagtail is at home here, you know, Mr Bang, and so is Mr Gelid ; but to what lucky chance am I indebted for *your* society, my dear sir ? ”

“ Thank your stars, Tom—*Captain* Cringle, I beg pardon—and be grateful ; I am sick of rumbling tumbling in company with these heavy tools of merchantmen, so I entreated Transom to let me go and take a turn with you, promising to join the Firebrand again at Nassau.”

“ Why, I am delighted,”—and so I really was. “ But, my dear sir—I may lead you a dance, and, peradventure, into trouble—a small vessel may catch a Tartar, you know.”

“ D—n the expense,” rejoined my jovial ally ; “ why,



the hot little epicurean Wagtail, and Gelid, cold and frozen as he is, have both taken a fancy to me—and no wonder, knowing my pleasant qualities as they do—ahem; so, for their sakes, I volunteer on this piece of knight-errantry as much as”——

“Poo—you be starved, Aaron dear,” rapped out little Wagtail; “you came here, because you thought you should have more fun, and escape the formality of the big ship, and eke the captain’s sour claret.”

“Ah,” said Gelid, “my fine fellow,” with his usual Creole drawl, “you did not wait for my opinion. Ah—oh—why, Captain Cringle, a thousand pardons. Friend Bang, there, swears that he can’t do without you; and all he says about me is neither more nor less than humbug—ah.”

“My lovely yellowsnake,” quoth Aaron, “and my amiable dumpling gentlemen both, now do hold your tongues.—Why, Tom, here we are, never you mind how, after half a quarrel with the skipper—will you take us, or will you send us back, like rejected addresses?”

“Send you back, my boys! No, no, too happy to get you.” Another gun from the corvette. “Firebrands, you must shove off. My compliments, Wiggins, to the captain, and there’s a trifle for you to drink my health, when you get into port.” The boat shoved off—the corvette filled her maintopsail. “Put the helm up—ease off the mainsheet—stand by to run up the squaresail. How is her head, Mr Tailtackle?”

Timothy gave a most extraordinary grin at my bestowing the *Mister* on him for the first time.

“North-west, sir.”

“Keep her so”—and having bore up, we rapidly widened our distance from the Commodore and the fleet.

All men know, or should know, that on board of a

man-of-war, there is never any "yo heave oh'ing." That is confined to merchant vessels. But when the crew are having a strong pull of any rope, it is allowable for the man next the belaying pin, to sing out, in order to give unity to the drag, "one—two—three," the strain of the other men increasing with the figure. The tack of the mainsail had got jammed somehow, and on my desiring it to be hauled up, the men, whose province it was, were unable to start it.

"Something foul aloft," said I.

Tailtackle came up. "What are you fiddling at, men? Give me here—one—two—three."

Crack went the strands of the rope under the paws of the Titan, whereby the head of the outermost sailor pitched right into Gelid's stomach, knocked him over, and capsized him head foremost into the wind sail which was let down through the skylight into the little well cabin of the schooner. It so happened that there was a bucket full of Spanish brown paint standing on the table in the cabin, right below the hoop of the canvass funnel, and into it popped the august pate of Paul Gelid, esquire. Bang had, in the meantime, caught him by the heels, and with the assistance of Pearl, the handsome negro formerly noticed, who, from his steadiness, had been spared to me as quartermaster, the conch was once more hoisted on deck, with a scalp of red paint, reaching down over his eyes.

"I say," quoth Bang, "Gelid, my darling, not quite so smooth as the real Macassar, eh? Shall I try my hand—can shave beautifully—eh?"

"Ah," drawled Gelid, "don't require it—lucky my head was shaved in that last fever, Aaron dear. Ah—let me think—you tall man—you sailor-fellow—ah—do me

the favour to scrape me with your knife—ah—and pray call my servant.”

Timothy, to whom he had addressed himself, set to, and scraped the red paint off his poll ; and having called his servant, *Chew Chew*, handed him over to the negro, who, giving his arm to him, helped him below, and with the assistance of Cologne water, contrived to scrub him decently clean.

As the evening fell, the breeze freshened ; and during the night it blew strong, so that from the time we bore up, and parted company with the *Firebrand*, until day-dawn next morning, we had run 130 miles or thereby to the northward and westward, and were then on the edge of the Great Bahama Bank. The breeze now failed us, and we lay roasting in the sun until mid-day, the current sweeping us to the northward, and still farther on to the bank, until the water shoaled to three fathoms. At this time the sun was blazing fiercely right overhead ; and from the shallowness of the water, there was not the smallest swell, or undulation of the surface. The sea, as far as the eye could reach, was a sparkling light green, from the snow-white sand at the bottom, as if a level desert had been suddenly submersed under a few feet of crystal clear water, which formed a cheery spectacle, when compared with the customary leaden, or dark blue colour of the rolling fathomless ocean. It was now dead calm. —“Fishing lines there—Idlers, fishing lines,” said I ; and in a minute there were forty of them down over the side.

In Europe, fish in their shapes partake of the sedate character of the people who inhabit the coasts of the seas or rivers in which they swim—at least I think so. The salmon, the trout, the cod, and all the other tribes of the finny people, are reputable in their shapes, and altogether respectable-looking creatures. But within the tropics,

Dame Nature plays strange vagaries ; and here, on the great Bahama Bank, every new customer, as he floundered in on deck—no joke to him, poor fellow—elicited shouts of laughter from the crew. They were in no respect shaped like fish of our cold climates ; some were all head—others all tail—some, so far as shape went, had their heads where, with submission, I conceived their tails should have been ; and then the colours, the intense brilliancy of the scales of these *monstrous*-looking animals. We hooked up a lot of bonitos, 10lbs. a-piece, at the least. But Wagtail took small account of them.

“ Here,” said Bang, at this moment, “ by all that is wonderful, look here ! ” And he drew up a fish about a foot long, with a crop like a pigeon of the tumbler kind, which began to make a loud snorting noise.

“ Ah,” drawled Gelid, “ good fish, with claret sauce.”

“ Daresay,” rejoined Aaron ; “ but do your Bahama fish speak, Paul, eh ?—Balaam’s ass was a joke to this fellow.”

I have already said that the water was not quite three fathoms deep, and it was so clear that I could see down to the very sand, and there were the fish cruising about in great numbers.

“ Haul in, Wagtail—you have hooked him,” and up came a beautiful black grouper, about four pounds weight.

“ Ah, there is the regular jiggery-jiggery,” sung out little Reefpoint, at the same moment, as he in turn began to pull up his line. “ Stand by to land him,” and a red snapper, for all the world like a gigantic gold fish, was hauled on board ; and so we carried on, black snappers, red snappers, and rock fish, and a vast variety, for all of which, however, Wagtail had names pat, until at length I caught a most lovely dolphin—a beauty to look at—but dry, terribly dry to eat. I cast it on the deck, and the

chameleon tints of the dying fish, about which so many lies have been said and sung, were just beginning to fade, and wax pale, and ashy, and deathlike, when I felt another strong jiggery-jiggery at my line, which little Reefpoint had, in the meantime, baited afresh. “Zounds! I have caught a whale—a shark at the very least”—and I pulled him in, hand over hand.

“A most noble Jew fish,” said I.

“A Jew fish!” responded Wagtail.

“A Jew fish!” said Aaron Bang.

“A Jew fish!” said Paul Gelid.

“My dear Cringle,” continued Wagtail, “when do you dine?”

“At three, as usual.”

“Then, Mr Reefpoint, will you have the great kindness to cast off your sink, and hook that splendid fellow by the tail—only through the gristle—don’t prick him in the flesh—and let him meander about till half-past two?”

Reefy was half inclined to be angry at the idea of his Majesty’s officer being converted into a cook’s mate.

“Why,” said I, “we shall put him in a tub of water here on deck, Mr Wagtail, if you please.”

“God bless me, no!” quoth the gastronome. “Why, he is strong as an eagle, and will smash himself to mummy in half an hour in a tub. No—no—see, he weighs twelve pounds at the very lightest. Lord! Mr Cringle, I am surprised at you.”

The fish was let overboard again, according to his desire, and hauled in at the very moment he indicated by his watch, when, having seen him cut up and cleaned, with his own eyes—I believe I may say with his own hands—he betook himself to his small crib to dress.

At dinner our Creole friend was very entertaining. Bang drew him out, and had him to talk on all his favourite

topics, in a most amusing manner. All at once Gelid lay back on his chair.

"My God," said he, "I have broken my tooth with that confounded hard biscuit—terrible—really; ah!"—and he screwed up his face, as if he had been eating sour-cROUT, or had heard of the death of a dear friend.

"Poo," quoth Aaron, "any combmaker will furnish you forth as good as new; those grinders you brag of are not your own, Gelid, you know that."

"Indeed, Aaron, my dear, I know nothing of the kind; but this I know, that I have broken a most lovely white front tooth, ah!"—

"Oh, you be hanged," said Aaron; "why, you have been bechopped any time these ten years, I know."

The time wore on, and it might have been half past seven when we went on deck.

It was a very dark night—Tailtackle had the watch. "Any thing in sight, Mr Tailtackle?"

"Why, no, sir; but I have just asked your steward for your night-glass, as, once or twice—but it is so thick—Pray, sir, how far are we off the Hole in the Wall?"

"Why, sixty miles at the least."

The Hole in the Wall is a very remarkable rock in the Crooked Island Passage, greatly resembling, as the name betokens, a wall breached by the sea, or by battering cannon, which rises abruptly out of the water, to a height of forty feet.

"Then," quoth Tailtackle sharply, "there must be a sail close aboard of us, to windward there."

"Where?" said I. "Quick, send for my night-glass."

"I have it here in my hand, sir."

"Let me see"—and I peered through it until my eyes ached again. I could see nothing, and resumed my walk on the quarterdeck. Tailtackle, in the meantime, con-



tinued to look through the telescope, and as I turned from aft to walk forward, a few minutes after this—"Why, sir," said he, "it clears a bit, and I see the object that has puzzled me again."

"Eh? give me the glass"—in a second I caught it. "By Jupiter, you say true, Tailtackle! beat to quarters—quick—clear away the long gun forward there!"

All was bustle for a minute. I kept my eye on the object, but I could not make out more, than that it was a strange sail; I could neither judge of her size nor her rig, from the distance, and the extreme darkness of the night. At length I handed the glass to Tailtackle again. We were at this time standing in towards the Cuba shore, with a fine breeze, and going along seven knots, as near as could be.

"Give the glass to Mr Jigmaree, Mr Tailtackle, and come forward here, and see all snug."

The long gun was slewed round—both carronades were run out, all three being loaded, double-shotted, and carefully primed—the whole crew, with our black supernumeraries, being at quarters.

"I see her quite distinct now, sir," sung out Timotheus.

"Well, what looks she like?"

"A large brig, sir, by the wind on the same tack—you can see her now without the glass—there—with the naked eye."

I looked, and certainly fancied I saw some towering object rising high and dark to windward, like some mighty spectre walking the deep, but I could discern nothing more.

"She is a large vessel, sure enough, sir," said Timothy once more—"now she is hauling up her courses, sir—she takes in topgallant sails—why, she is bearing up across our bows, sir—mind she don't rake us."

“The deuce!” said I. I now saw the chase very distinctly bear up. “Put the helm up—keep her away a bit—steady—that will do—fire a shot across her bows, Mr Taitackle—and, Mr Reefpoint, show the private signal.” The gun was fired, and the lights shown, but our spectral friend was all darkness and silence. “Mr Scarfemwell,” said I to the carpenter, “stand by the long gun. Taitackle, I don’t like that chap—open the magazine.” By this time the strange sail was on our quarter—we shortened sail, while he, finding that his manœuvre of crossing our bows had been foiled by our bearing up also, got the foretack on board again, and set his topgallant sails, all very cleverly. He was not far out of pistol-shot. Taitackle, in his shirt and trowsers, and felt shoes, now stuck his head up the main hatchway.

“I would recommend your getting the hatches on, sir—that fellow is not honest, sir, take my word for it.”

“Never mind, Mr Taitackle, never mind. Forward, there; Mr Jigmaree, slap a round shot into him, since he won’t speak, or heave-to—right between his masts, do you hear—are you ready?”

“All ready, sir.”

“Fire.” The gun was fired, and simultaneously we heard a crash on board the strange sail, followed by a piercing yell, similar to what the negroes raise over a dead comrade, and then a long melancholy howl.

“A slaver, and the shot has told, sir,” said Mr Hand-lead, the master.

“Then we shall have some fun for it,” thought I. I had scarcely spoken, when the brig once more shortened sail; and the instant that the foresail rose, he let fly his bow gun at us—then another, another, and another.

“Nine guns of a side, as I am a sinner,” quoth Jigmaree; and three of the shot struck us, mortally wounded

one poor fellow, and damaged poor little Reefy by a splinter in the side.

“Stand by, men—take good aim—fire”—and we again let drive the long gun and carronade; but our friend was too quick for us, for by this time he had once more hauled his wind, and made sail as close to it as he could stagger. We crowded every thing in chase, but he had the heels of us, and in an hour he was once more nearly out of sight in the dark night, right to windward.

“Keep at him, Mr Jigmaree;” and as I feared he was running us in under the land, I dived to consult the chart. There, in the cabin, I found Wagtail, Gelid, and Bang, sitting smoking on each side of the small table, with some brandy and water before them.

“Ah,” quoth Gelid, “ah! fighting a little? Not pleasant in the evening, certainly.”

“Confound you,” said Aaron, “why will you bother at this awkward moment?”

Meanwhile Wagtail was a good deal discomposed.

“My dear fellow, hand me over that deviled biscuit.”

Bang handed him over the dish, slipping into it some fragments of ship biscuit, as hard as flint. All this time I was busy poring over the chart. Wagtail took up a piece and popt it into his mouth.

“Zounds, Bang—my dear Aaron, what dentist are you in league with? Gelid first breaks his pet fang, and now you”——

“Poo, poo,” quoth his friend, “don’t bother now—hillo—what the deuce—I say, Wagtail—Gelid, my lad, look there”—as one of the seamen, with another following him, brought down on his back the poor fellow who had been wounded, and laid his bloody load on the table. To those who are unacquainted with these matters, it may be right to say, that the captain’s cabin, in a small

vessel like the Wave, is often in an emergency used as a cockpit—and so it was in the present instance.

“Beg pardon, captain and gentlemen,” said the surgeon, “but I must, I fear, perform an ugly operation on this poor fellow. I fancy you had better go on deck, gentlemen.”

Now I had an opportunity to see of what sterling metal my friends were at bottom made. Mr Bang in a twinkling had his coat off.

“Doctor, I can be of use, I know it—no skill, but steady nerves,”—although he had reckoned a *leetle* without his host here,—“And I can swathe a bandage too, although no surgeon,” said Wagtail.

Gelid said nothing, but he was in the end the best surgeon’s mate amongst them. The poor fellow, Wiggins, one of the captain’s gigs, and a most excellent man, in quarterdeck parlance, was now laid on the table—a fine handsome young fellow, faint and pale, very pale, but courageous as a lion, even in his extremity. It appeared that a round shot had shattered his leg above the knee. A tourniquet had been applied on his thigh, and there was not much bleeding.

“Captain,” said the poor fellow, while Bang supported him in his arms—“I shall do yet, sir; indeed I have no great pain.”

All this time the surgeon was cutting off his trowsers, and then, to be sure, a terrible spectacle presented itself. The foot and leg, blue and shrunk, were connected with the thigh by a band of muscle about two inches wide, and an inch thick; that fined away to a bunch of white tendons or sinews at the knee, which again swelled out as they melted into the muscles of the calf of the leg; but as for the knee bone, it was smashed to pieces,

leaving white spikes protruding from the shattered limb above, as well as from the shank beneath. The doctor gave the poor fellow a large dose of laudanum in a glass of brandy, and then proceeded to amputate the limb, high up on the thigh. Bang stood the knife part of it very steadily, but the instant the saw rasped against the shattered bone he shuddered.

“I am going, Cringle—can’t stand that—sick as a dog”—and he was so faint that I had to relieve him in supporting the poor fellow. Wagtail had also to go on deck, but Paul Gelid remained firm as a rock. The limb was cut off, the arteries taken up very cleverly, and the surgeon was in the act of slacking the tourniquet a little, when the thread that fastened the largest, or femoral artery, suddenly gave way—a gush like the jet from a fire-engine took place. The poor fellow had just time to cry out, “Take that cold hand off my heart!” when his chest collapsed, his jaw fell, and in an instant his pulse stopped.

“Dead as Julius Cæsar, captain,” said Gelid, with his usual deliberation. Dead enough, thought I; and I was leaving the cabin to resume my post on deck, when I stumbled against something at the ladder foot.

“Why, what is that?” grumbled I.

“It is me, sir,” said a small faint voice.

“You! who are you?”

“Reefpoint, sir.”

“Bless me, boy, what are you doing here? Not hurt, I hope?”

“A little, sir—a graze from a splinter, sir—the same shot that struck poor Wiggins knocked it off, sir.”

“Why did you not go to the doctor, then, Mr Reefpoint?”

“I waited till he was done with Wiggins, sir; but

now, since it is all over with him, I will go and be dressed."

His voice grew fainter and fainter, until I could scarcely hear him. I got him in my arms, and helped him into the cabin, where, on stripping the poor little fellow, it was found that he was much hurt on the right side, just above the hip. Bang's kind heart, for by this time a glass of water had cured him of his faintness, shone conspicuous on this occasion.

"Why, Reefy—little Reefy—you are not hurt, my man—Surely you are not wounded—such a little fellow,—I should have as soon thought of firing at a musquitto."

"Indeed, sir, but I am ; see here."—Bang looked at the hurt, as he supported the wounded midshipman in his arms.

"God help me," said the excellent fellow, "you seem to me fitter for your mother's nursery, my poor dear boy, than to be knocked about in this coarse way here."

Reefy, at this moment, fell over into his arms, in a dead faint.

"You must take my berth, with the captain's permission," said Aaron, while he and Wagtail undressed him with the greatest care, and placed him in the narrow crib.

"Thank you, my dear sir," moaned little Reefpoint ; "were my mother here, sir, she would thank you too."

Stern duty now called me on deck, and I heard no more. The night was still very dark, and I could see nothing of the chase, but I made all the sail I could in the direction which I calculated she would steer, trusting that, before morning, we might get another glimpse of her. In a little while Bang came on deck.

"I say, Tom, now since little Reefy is asleep—what think you—big craft that—nearly caught a Tartar—not very sorry he has escaped, eh?"



“Why, my dear sir, I trust he has *not* escaped; I hope, when the day breaks, now since we have less wind, that we may have a tussle with him yet.”

“No, you don’t wish it, do you, really and truly?”

“Indeed, I do, sir; and the only thing which bothers me is the peril that you and your friends must necessarily encounter.”

“Poo, poo, don’t mind us, Tom, don’t mind us; but an’t he too big for you, Tom?”

He said this in such a comical way, that, for the life of me, I could not help laughing.

“Why, we shall see; but attack him I must, and shall, if I can get at him. However, we shall wait till morning; so I recommend your turning in, now since they have cleared away the cockpit out of the cabin; so good-night, my dear sir—I must stay here, I fear.”

“Good-night, Tom; God bless you. I shall go and comfort Wagtail and Paul.”

I was at this time standing well aft on the larboard side of the deck, close abaft of the tiller-rope, so that, with no earthly disposition to be an eavesdropper, I could neither help seeing nor hearing what was going on in the cabin, as the small open skylight was close to my foot. All vestiges of the cockpit had been cleared away, and the table was laid for supper. Wagtail and Gelid were sitting on the side I stood on, so that I could not see them, although I heard every word they said. Presently Bang entered, and sat down opposite his allies. He crossed his arms, and leant down over the table, looking at them steadily.

“My dear Aaron,” I could hear little Wagtail say, “speak, man, don’t frighten a body so.”

“Ah, Bang,” drawled out Paul, “jests are good, being well-timed; what can you mean by that face of yours *now*, since the fighting is all over?”

My curiosity fairly overcame my good manners, and I moved round more amidst ships, so as to command a view of both parties, as they sat opposite each other at the narrow table.

Bang still held his peace for another minute ; at length, in a very solemn tone, he said, "Gentlemen, do you ever say your prayers?" I don't know if I mentioned it before, but Aaron had a most musical deep mellow voice, and now it absolutely thrilled to my very soul.

Wagtail and Paul looked at him, and then at each other, with a most absurd expression—between fear and jest—between crying and laughing—but gave him no answer.

"Are you, my lads, such blockheads as to be ashamed to acknowledge that you say your prayers?"

"Ah," said Gelid, "why, ah no—not—that is"——

"Oh, you Catholics are all so bigoted,—I suppose we should cross ourselves, eh?" said Wagtail hastily.

"I am a Catholic, Master Wagtail," rejoined Bang—"better that than nothing. Before sunrise, we may both have proved the truth of our creeds, if *you* have one ; but if you mean it as a taunt, Wagtail, it does discredit to your judgment to select such a moment, to say nothing of your heart. However, you cannot make me angry with you, Pepperpot, you little Creole wasp, do as you will." A slight smile here curled Aaron's lip for an instant, although he immediately resumed the solemn tone in which he had previously spoken.—"But I had hoped that two such old friends, as you both have been to me, would not altogether have made up their minds in cold blood, if advertised of their danger, to run the chance of dying like dogs in a ditch, without one preparatory thought towards that tremendous Being, before whom we may all stand before morning."

“Murder!” quoth Wagtail, fairly frightened; “are you *really* serious, Aaron? I did not—would not, for the world, hurt your feelings in earnest, my dear; why do you desire so earnestly to know whether or not I ever say my prayers?”

“Oh, don’t bother, man,” rejoined Bang, resuming his usual friendly tone; “you had better say boldly that you do not, without any roundaboutation.”

“But why, my dear Bang, why do you ask the question?” persisted Wagtail, in a deuced quandary.

“Simply,”—and here our friend’s voice once more fell to the low deep serious tone in which he had opened the conference,—“simply because, in my humble estimation, if you don’t say your prayers to-night, it is three to one you shall never pray again.”

“The deuce!” said Pepperpot, twisting himself in all directions, as if his inexpressibles had been nailed to his seat, and he was trying to escape from them. “What, in the devil’s name, mean you, man?”

“I mean neither more nor less than what I say. I speak English, don’t I? I say, that that pestilent young fellow Cringle told me half an hour ago, that he was *determined*, as he words it, to stick to this Guineaman, who is three times his size, has eighteen guns, while Master Tommy has only three; and whose crew, I will venture to say, triples our number; and the snipe, from what I know of him, is the very man to keep his word—so what say you, my darling, eh?”

“Ah, very inconvenient, ah,—I shall stay below,” said Paul.

“So shall I,” quoth Pepperpot; “won’t stick my nose on deck, Aaron dear, no, not for the whole world.”

“Why,” said Bang, in the same steady low tone, “you shall do as you please, ah,”—and here he very

successfully imitated our *amigo* Gelid's drawl—"and as best suits you, ah; but I have consulted the gunner, an old ally of mine, who, to be plain with you—ah—says that the danger from splinter wounds below, is much greater than from their musketry on deck—ah—the risk from the round shot being pretty equal—ah—in either situation." At this announcement you could have jumped down either Wagtail's or Gelid's throat,—Wagtail's for choice,—without touching their teeth. "Farther, the aforesaid Timothy, and be hanged to him, deponeth, that the only place in a small vessel where we could have had a moderate chance of safety was the run,—so called, I presume, from people running to it for safety; but where the deuce this sanctuary is situated I know not, nor does it signify greatly, for it is now converted into a spare powder magazine, and of course sealed to us. So here we are, my lads, in as neat a taking as ever three unfortunate gentlemen were in, in this weary world. However, now since I have comforted you, let us go to bed—time enough to think on all this in the morning, and I am consumedly tired."

I heard no more, and resumed my solitary walk on deck, peering every now and then through the night-glass, until my eyes ached again. The tedious night at length wore away, and the grey dawn found me sound asleep, leaning out at the gangway. They had scarcely begun to wash down the decks, when we discerned our friend of the preceding night, about four miles to windward, close hauled on the same tack, apparently running in for the Cuba shore, as fast as canvass could carry him. If this was his object, we had proved too quick for him, as by casting off stays, and slacking shrouds, and, in every way we could think of, loosening the rigid trim of the little vessel, we had in a great measure recovered

her sailing; so when he found he was cut off from the land, he resolutely bore up, took in his topgallant-sails, hauled up his courses, fired a gun, and hoisted his large Spanish ensign, all in regular man-of-war fashion. By this time it was broad daylight, and Wagtail, Gelid, and Bang, were all three on deck, performing their morning ablutions. As for myself, I was well forward, near the long gun. Pegtop, Mr Bang's black valet, came up to me.

"Please, Massa Captain, can you spare me any muskets?"

"Any muskets?" said I; "why, half-a-dozen if you choose."

"De wery number my massa told me to hax for. Tank you, Massa Captain." And forthwith he and the other two black servants in attendance on Wagtail and Gelid, each seized his two muskets out of the arm-chest, with the corresponding ammunition, and, like so many sable Robinson Crusoes, were stumping aft, when I again accosted the aforesaid Pegtop.

"I say, my man, now since you have got the muskets, does your master *really* intend to fight?" The negro stopped short, and faced right round, his countenance expressing very great surprise and wonderment. "Massa Bang fight? Massa Aaron Bang fight?" and he looked up in my face with the most serio-comic expression that could be imagined. "Ah, massa," continued the poor fellow,—“you is joking—surely you is joking—my Massa Aaron Bang fight? Oh, massa, surely you can't know he—surely you never see *him* shoot snipe, and wild-duck—oh dear, why him kill wild-duck on de wing—ah, me often see him knock down teal wid single ball, one hundred—ah, one hundred and fifty yards—and man surely more big mark den teal?"

“Granted,” I said; “but a teal has not a loaded musket in its claws, as a Spanish bucanier may have—a small difference, Master Pegtop, in that?”

“None at all, massa,” chimed in Pegtop, very energetically—“I myshef, Gabriel Pegtop, Christian man as me is, am one of de Falmouth black shot. Ah, I have been in de woods wid Massa Aaron—one time particular, when dem wery debils, Sambo Moses, Corromantee Tom, and Eboe Peter, took to de bush, at Crabyaw estate—after breakfast—ten black shot—me was one—go out along wid our good massa, Massa Aaron. Oh Lord, we walk troo de cool wood, and over de hot cleared ground, six hour, when every body say,—‘No use dis, Massa Bang—all we tired too much—must stop here—kindle fire—cook wittal.’ ‘Ah, top dem who hab white liver,’ said Massa Aaron; ‘you, Pegtop, take you fusee and cutlass, and follow me, my shild’—Massa Aaron alway call me him *shild*, and troo enough, as parson Calaloo say, him family wery much like Joseph coat—many colour among dem, massa—though none quite so *deep* as mine eider”—and here the negro grinned at his own jest. “Well, I was follow him, or rader was go before him, opening up de pass wid me cutlass, troo de wery tangle underwood. We walk four hour,—see no one—all still and quiet—no breeze shake de tree—oh, I sweat too much—dem hot, massa—sun shine right down, when we could catch glimpse of him—yet no trace of de run-aways. At length, on turning corner, perched on small platform of rock, overshadowed by plumes of bamboos, like ostrich feather lady wear at de ball, who shall we see but dem wery dividual d—rascail I was mention, standing all tree, each wid one carabine pointed at us, at him shoulder, and cutlass at him side? ‘Pegtop, my boy,’ said Massa Aaron, ‘we is *in* for it—follow me, but



don't fire.' So him pick off Sambo Moses—oh! cool as one cucumber. 'Now,' say he, 'man to man,'—and wid dat him tro him gun on de ground, and drawing him cutlass, we push up—in one moment him and Corromantee Tom close. Tom put up him hand to fend him head—whip—ah—massa cutlass shred de hand at de wrist, like one carrot—down Tom go—atop of him jump Massa Aaron. I master de leetle one, Eboe Peter, and we carry dem both prisoners into Falmouth.—Massa Aaron fight? Ah, massa, no hax dat question again."

"Well, but will Mr Gelid fight?" said I.

"I tink him will too—great friend of Massa Bang—good duck-shot too—oh yes, tink Massa Paul will fight."

"Why," said I, "your friends are all heroes, Pegtop—will Mr Wagtail fight also?" He stole close up to me, and exchanged his smart Creole gibberish for a quiet sedate accent, as he whispered—

"Not so sure of he—nice little fat man, but too fond of him belly. When I wait behind Massa Aaron chair, Pegtop sometime hear funny ting. One gentleman say—'Ah, dat month we hear Lord Wellington take Saint Sebastian—when dat is, what time we hear dat news, Massa Wagtail?' him say.—'Eh,' say Massa Wagtail—'oh, we hear of dem news, dat very day de first of de ringtail pigeon come to market.' Den again, 'Dat big fight dem had at soch anoder place, when we hear of dat, Massa Wagtail?'—say somebody else.—'Oh, oh, de very day we hab dat beautiful grouper wid claret sauce at Massa Whiffle's.' Oh, make me laugh to hear white gentleman mark great fight in him memory by what him eat de day de news come; so, Massa Captain Cringle, me no quite sure weder Massa Wagtail will fight or no."

So saying, Pegtop, Chew Chew, and Yampea, each

shouldered two muskets a-piece, and betook themselves to the after part of the schooner, where they forthwith set themselves to scour, and oil, and clean the same, in a most skilful manner. I expected the breeze would have freshened as the day broke, but I was disappointed; it fell, towards six o'clock, nearly calm. Come, thought I, we may as well go to breakfast; and my guests and I forthwith sat down to our morning meal. Soon after, the wind died away altogether—and “out sweeps” was the word; but I soon saw we had no chance with the chase at this game, and as to attacking him with the boats, it was entirely out of the question; neither could I, in the prospect of a battle, afford to murder the people, by pulling all day under a roasting sun, against one who could man his sweeps with relays of slaves, without one of his crew putting a finger to them; so I reluctantly laid them in, and there I stood looking at him the whole forenoon, as he gradually drew a-head of us. At length I piped to dinner, and the men having finished theirs, were again on deck; but the calm still continued; and seeing no chance of it freshening, about four in the afternoon we sat down to ours in the cabin. There was little said; my friends, although brave and resolute men, were naturally happy to see the brig creeping away from us, as fighting could only bring them danger; and my own feelings were of that mixed quality, that while I determined to do all I could to bring him to action, it would not have broken my heart had he escaped. We had scarcely finished dinner, however, when the rushing of the water past the run of the little vessel, and the steadiness with which she skimmed along, showed that the light air had freshened.

Presently Tiltackle came down. “The breeze has set down, sir; the strange sail has got it strong to windward, and brings it along with him cheerily.”

“Beat to quarters, then, Tailtackle; all hands stand by to shorten sail. How is she standing?”

“Right down for us, sir.”

I went on deck, and there was the Guineaman about two miles to windward, evidently cleared for action, with her decks crowded with men, bowling along steadily under her single-reefed topsails.

I saw all clear. Wagtail and Gelid had followed me on deck, and were now busy with their black servants inspecting the muskets. But Bang still remained in the cabin. I went down. He was gobbling his last plantain, and forking up along with it most respectable slices of cheese, when I entered.

I had seen before I left the deck that an action was now unavoidable, and judging from the disparity of force, I had my own doubts as to the issue. I need scarcely say that I was greatly excited. It was my first command: My future standing in the service depended on my conduct *now*,—and, God help me, I was all this while a mere lad, not more than twenty-one years old. A strange indescribable feeling had come over me, and an irresistible desire to disburden my mind to the excellent man before me. I sat down.

“Hey day,” quoth Bang, as he laid down his coffee-cup; “why, Tom, what ails you? You look deuced pale, my boy.”

“Up all night, sir, and bothered all day,” said I; “wearied enough, I can tell you.”

I felt a strong tremor pervade my whole frame at this moment; and I was impelled to speak by some unknown impulse, which I could not account for nor analyze.

“Mr Bang, you are the only friend whom I could count on in these countries; you know all about me and mine, and, I believe, would willingly do a kind action to my father’s son.”

“What are you at, Tom, my dear boy? come to the point, man.”

“I will. I am distressed beyond measure at having led you and your excellent friends, Wagtail and Gelid, into this danger; but I could not help it, and I have satisfied my conscience on that point; so I have only to entreat that you will stay below, and not unnecessarily expose yourselves. And if I should fall—may I take this liberty, my dear sir,” and I involuntarily took his hand,—“if I should fall, and *I doubt if I shall ever see the sun set again*, as we are fearfully overmatched”——

Bang struck in—

“Why, if our friend be too big—why not be off then? Pull foot, man, eh?—Havannah under your lee?”

“A thousand reasons against it, my dear sir. I am a young man and a young officer, my character is to *make* in the service—No, no, it is impossible—an older and more tried hand might have bore up, but I must fight it out. If any stray shot carries me off, my dear sir, will you take”—Mary, I would have said, but I could not pronounce her name for the soul of me—“will you take charge of *her* miniature, and say I died as I have”—a choking lump rose in my throat, and I could not proceed for a second; “and will you send my writing desk to my poor mother, there are letters in”—the lump grew bigger, the hot tears streamed from my eyes in torrents. I trembled like an aspen leaf, and grasping my excellent friend’s hand more firmly, I sunk down on my knees in a passion of tears, and wept like a woman, while I fervently prayed to that great God, in whose almighty hand I stood, that I might that day do my duty as an English seaman. Bang knelt by me. Presently the passion was quelled. I rose, and so did he.

“Before you, my dear sir, I am not ashamed to have”——

“Don’t mention it—my good boy—don’t mention it ; neither of us, as the old general said, will fight a bit the worse.”

I looked at him. “Do you then mean to fight?” said I.

“To be sure I do—why not? I have no wife,”—he did not say he had no children—“Fight? To be sure I do.”

“Another gun, sir,” said Tailtackle, through the open skylight. Now all was bustle, and we hastened on deck. Our antagonist was a large brig, three hundred tons at the least, a long low vessel, painted black, out and in, and her sides round as an apple, with immensely square yards. She was apparently full of men. The sun was getting low, and she was coming down fast on us, on the verge of the dark blue water of the sea breeze. I could make out ten ports and nine guns of a side. I inwardly prayed they might not be long ones, but I was not a little startled to see through the glass that there were crowds of naked negroes at quarters, and on the forecastle and poop. That she was a contraband Guineaman, I had already made up my mind to believe ; and that she had some fifty hands of a crew, I also considered likely ; but that her captain should have resorted to such a perilous measure, perilous to themselves as well as to us, as arming the captive slaves, was quite unexpected, and not a little alarming, as it evinced his determination to make the most desperate resistance.

Tailtackle was standing beside me at this time, with his jacket off, his cutlass girded on his thigh, and the belt drawn very tight. All the rest of the crew were armed in a similar fashion ; the small-arm-men with muskets in their hands, and the rest at quarters at the guns ; while the pikes were cast loose from the spars round which they had been stopped, with tubs of wadding, and

boxes of grape, all ready ranged, and every thing clear for action.

“ Mr Tailtackle,” said I, “ you are gunner here, and should be in the magazine. Cast off that cutlass ; it is not your province to lead the boarders.” The poor fellow blushed, having, in the excitement of the moment, forgotten that he was any thing more than captain of the Firebrand’s maintop.

“ Mr Timotheus,” said Bang, “ have you one of these bodkins to spare ? ”

Timothy laughed. “ Certainly, sir ; but *you* don’t mean to head the boarders, sir—do you ? ”

“ Who knows, now since I have learned to walk on this dancing cork of a craft ? ” rejoined Aaron, with a grim smile, while he pulled off his coat, braced on his cutlass, and tied a large red cotton shawl round his head. He then took off his neckerchief and fastened it round his waist, as tight as he could draw.

“ Strange that all men in peril—on the uneasiness, like,” said he, “ should always gird themselves as tightly as they can.”

The slaver was now within musket-shot, when he put his helm to port, with the view of passing under our stern. To prevent being raked, we had to luff up sharp in the wind, and fire a broadside. I noticed the white splinters glance from his black wales ; and once more the same sharp yell rung in our ears, followed by the long melancholy howl, already described.

“ We have pinned some of the poor blacks again,” said Tailtackle, who still lingered on the deck ; small space for remark, for the slaver again fired his broadside at us, with the same cool precision as before.

“ Down with the helm, and let her come round,” said I ; “ that will do—master, run across his stern—out



sweeps forward, and keep her there—get the other caronade over to leeward—that is it—now, blaze away while he is becalmed—fire, small-arm-men, and take good aim.”

We were now right across his stern, with the spanker boom within ten yards of us; and although he worked his two stern chasers with great determination, and poured whole showers of musketry from his rigging, and poop, and cabin-windows, yet, from the cleverness with which our sweeps were pulled, and the accuracy with which we were kept in our position, right athwart his stern, our fire, both from the cannon and musketry, the former loaded with round and grape, was telling, I could see, with fearful effect.

Crash—“ There, my lads, down goes his maintopmast—pepper him well, while they are blinded and confused among the wreck. Fire away—there goes the peak, shot away cleverly, close by the throat. Don’t cease firing, although his flag be down—it was none of his doing. There, my lads, there he has it again; you have shot away the weather foretopsail sheet, and he cannot get from under you.”

Two men at this moment lay out on his larboard foreyard-arm, apparently with the intention of splicing the sheet, and getting the clew of the foretopsail once more down to the yard; if they had succeeded in this, the vessel would again have fetched way, and drawn out from under our fire. Mr Bang and Paul Gelid had all this time been firing with murderous precision, from where they had ensconced themselves under the shelter of the larboard bulwark, close to the tafferel, with their three black servants in the cabin, loading the six muskets, and little Wagtail, who was no great shot, sitting on the deck, handing them up and down.

“ Now, Mr Bang,” cried I, “ for the love of Heaven,”

—and may Heaven forgive me for the ill-placed exclamation—“mark these two men—down with them!”

Bang turned towards me with all the coolness in the world—“What, those chaps on the end of the long stick?”

“Yes—yes,” (I here spoke of the larboard foreyard-arm,) “yes, down with them.”

He lifted his piece as steadily as if he had really been duck-shooting.

“I say, Gelid, my lad, take you the innermost.”

“Ah!” quoth Paul. They fired—and down dropped both men, and squattered for a moment in the water, like wounded waterfowl, and then sank for ever, leaving two small puddles of blood on the surface.

“Now, master,” shouted I, “put the helm up and lay him alongside—there—stand by with the grapplings—one round the backstay—the other through the chainplate there—so,—you have it.” As we ranged under his counter—“Mainchains are your chance, men—boarders, follow me.” And in the enthusiasm of the moment, I jumped into the slaver’s main channel, followed by twenty-eight men. We were in the act of getting over the netting when the enemy rallied, and fired a volley of small arms, which sent four out of the twenty-eight to their account, and wounded three more. We gained the quarterdeck, where the Spanish captain, and about forty of his crew, showed a determined front, cutlass and pistol in hand—we charged them—they stood their ground. Tiltackle (who, the moment he heard the boarders called, had jumped out of the magazine, and followed me) at a blow clove the Spanish captain to the chine; the lieutenant, or second in command, was my bird, and I had disabled him by a sabre-cut on the sword-arm, when he drew his pistol, and shot me through

the left shoulder. I felt no pain, but a sharp pinch, and then a cold sensation, as if water had been poured down my neck.

Jigmaree was close by me with a boarding-pike, and our fellows were fighting with all the gallantry inherent in British sailors. For a moment the battle was poised in equal scales. At length our antagonist gave way, when about fifteen of the slaves, naked barbarians, who had been ranged with muskets in their hands on the fore-castle, suddenly jumped down into the waist with a yell, and came to the rescue of the Spanish part of the crew.

I thought we were lost. Our people, all but Tail-tackle, poor Handlead, and Jigmaree, held back. The Spaniards rallied, and fought with renewed courage, and it was now, not for glory, but for dear life, as all retreat was cut off by the parting of the grapplings and warps, that had lashed the schooner alongside of the slaver, for the Wave had by this time forged a-head, and lay across the brig's bows, in place of being on her quarter, with her foremast jammed against the slaver's bowsprit, whose spritsail-yard crossed our deck between the masts. We could not therefore retreat to our own vessel if we had wished it, as the Spaniards had possession of the waist and fore-castle; all at once, however, a discharge of round and grape crashed through the bridleport of the brig, and swept off three of the black auxiliaries before mentioned, and wounded as many more, and the next moment an unexpected ally appeared on the field. When we boarded, the Wave had been left with only Peter Mangrove; the five dockyard negroes; Pearl, one of the Captain's gigs, the handsome black already introduced on the scene; poor little Reefpoint, who, as already stated, was badly hurt; Aaron Bang, Paul Gelid, and Wagtail. But this Pearl without price, at the very moment of time

when I thought the game was up, jumped on deck through the bowport, cutlass in hand, followed by the five black carpenters and Peter Mangrove, after whom appeared no less a personage than Aaron Bang himself and the three blackamoor valets, armed with boarding-pikes. Bang flourished his cutlass for an instant.

"Now, Pearl, my darling, shout to them in Coromantee,—shout ;" and forthwith the black quartermaster sung out, "Coromantee Sheik Cocoloo, kockernony populorum fiz," which, as I afterwards learned, being interpreted, is, "Behold the Sultan Cocoloo, the great ostrich, with a feather in his tail like a palm branch ; fight for him, you sons of female dogs." In an instant the black Spanish auxiliaries sided with Pearl, and Bang, and the negroes, and joined in charging the white Spaniards, who were speedily driven down the main hatchway, leaving one half of their number dead, or badly wounded on the blood-slippery deck. But they still made a desperate defence, by firing up the hatchway. I hailed them to surrender.

"Zounds," cried Jigmaree, "there's the clink of hammers ; they are knocking off the fetters of the slaves."

"If you let the blacks loose," I sung out in Spanish, "by the Heaven above us, I will blow you up, although I should go with you ! Hold your hands, Spaniards ! Mind what you do, madmen !"

"On with the hatches, men," shouted Tailtackle.

They had been thrown overboard, or put out of the way, they could nowhere be seen. The firing from below continued.

"Cast loose that carronade there ; clap in a canister of grape—so—now run it forward, and fire down the hatchway." It was done, and taking effect amongst the pent-up slaves, such a yell arose—oh God ! oh God !—

I never can forget it. Still the maniacs continued firing up the hatchway.

“Load and fire again.” My people were now furious, and fought more like incarnate fiends broke loose from hell than human beings.

“Run the gun up to the hatchway once more.” They ran the carronade so furiously forward, that the coaming, or ledge was split off, and down went the gun, carriage and all, with a crash into the hold. Presently smoke appeared rising up the fore-hatchway.

“They have set fire to the brig; overboard!—regain the schooner, or we shall all be blown into the air like peels of onions!” sung out little Jigmaree.

But where was the Wave? She had broke away, and was now a cable’s length a-head, apparently fast leaving us, with Paul Gelid and Wagtail, and poor little Reef-point, who, badly wounded as he was, had left his hammock, and come on deck in the emergency, making signs of their inability to cut away the halyards; and the tiller being shot away, the schooner had become utterly unmanageable.

“Up, and let fall the foresail, men—down with the fore-tack—cheerily now—get way on the brig, and overhaul the Wave promptly, or we are lost,” cried I. It was done with all the coolness of desperate men. I took the helm, and presently we were once more alongside of our own vessel. Time we were so, for about one hundred and fifty of the slaves, whose shackles had been knocked off, now scrambled up the fore-hatchway, and we had only time to jump overboard, when they made a rush aft; and no doubt, exhausted as we were, they would have massacred us on the spot, frantic and furious as they had become from the murderous fire of grape that had been directed down the hatchway.

But the fire was quicker than they. The smouldering smoke, that was rising like a pillar of cloud from the fore-hatchway, was now streaked with tongues of red flame, which, licking the masts and spars, ran up and caught the sails and rigging. In an instant, the fire spread to every part of the gear aloft, while the other element, the sea, was also striving for the mastery in the destruction of the doomed vessel; for our shot, or the fall of the carronade into the hold, had started some of the bottom planks, and she was fast settling down by the head. We could hear the water rushing in like a mill stream. The fire increased—her guns went off as they became heated—she gave a sudden heel—and while five hundred human beings, pent up in her noisome hold, split the heavens with their piercing death-yells, down she went with a heavy lurch, head foremost, right in the wake of the setting sun, whose level rays made the thick dun wreaths that burst from her as she disappeared, glow with the hue of the amethyst; and while the whirling clouds, gilded by his dying radiance, curled up into the blue sky, in rolling masses, growing thinner and thinner, until they vanished away, even like the wreck whereout they arose,—and the circling eddies, created by her sinking, no longer sparkled and flashed in the red light,—and the stilled waters where she had gone down, as if oil had been cast on them, were spread out like polished silver, shining like a mirror, while all around was dark blue ripple,—a puff of fat black smoke, denser than any we had yet seen, suddenly emerged, with a loud gurgling noise, from out the deep bosom of the calmed sea, and rose like a balloon, rolling slowly upwards, until it reached a little way above our mastheads, where it melted and spread out into a dark pall, that overhung the scene of death, as if the incense of such a



horrible and polluted sacrifice could not ascend into the pure heaven, but had been again crushed back upon our devoted heads, as a palpable manifestation of the wrath of *Him* who hath said—"Thou shalt not kill."

For a few moments all was silent as the grave, and I felt as if the air had become too thick for breathing, while I looked up like another Cain.

Presently, about one hundred and fifty of the slaves, *men, women, and children*, who had been drawn down by the vortex, rose amidst numberless pieces of smoking wreck, to the surface of the sea; the strongest yelling like fiends in their despair, while the weaker, the women, and the helpless gasping little ones, were choking, and gurgling, and sinking all around. Yea, the small thin expiring cry of the innocent sucking infant torn from its sinking mother's breast, as she held it for a brief moment above the waters, which had already for ever closed over herself, was there.—But we could not perceive one single individual of her white crew; like desperate men, they had all gone down with the brig. We picked up about one half of the miserable Africans, and—my pen trembles as I write it—fell necessity compelled us to fire on the remainder, as it was utterly impossible for us to take them on board. Oh that I could erase such a scene for ever from my memory! One incident I cannot help relating. We had saved a woman, a handsome, clear-skinned girl, of about sixteen years of age. She was very faint when we got her in, and was lying with her head over a port-sill, when a strong athletic young negro swam to the part of the schooner where she was. She held down her hand to him; he was in the act of grasping it, when he was shot through the heart from above. She instantly jumped overboard, and, clasping him in her arms, they sank, and disappeared together. "Oh, woman,

whatever may be the colour of your skin, your heart is of one only!" said Aaron.

Soon all was quiet; a wounded black here and there was shrieking in his great agony, and struggling for a moment before he sank into his watery grave for ever; a few pieces of wreck were floating and sparkling on the surface of the deep in the blood-red sunbeams, which streamed in a flood of glorious light on the bloody deck, shattered hull, and torn sails and rigging of the Wave, and on the dead bodies and mangled limbs of those who had fallen; while some heavy scattering drops of rain fell sparkling from a passing cloud, as if Nature had wept in pity over the dismal scene; or as if they had been blessed tears, shed by an angel, in his heavenward course, as he hovered for a moment, and looked down in pity on the fantastic tricks played by the worm of a day—by weak man, in his little moment of power and ferocity. I said something—ill and hastily. Aaron was close beside me, sitting on a carronade slide, while the surgeon was dressing a pike wound in his neck. He looked up solemnly in my face, and then pointed to the blessed luminary, that was now sinking in the sea, and blazing up into the resplendent heavens—"Cringle, for shame—for shame—your impatience is blasphemous. Remember this morning—and thank *Him*"—here he looked up and crossed himself—"thank Him who, while he has called poor Mr Handlead, and so many brave fellows, to their last awful reckoning, has mercifully brought *us* to the end of this fearful day;—oh, thank Him, Tom, *that you have seen the sun set once more!*"

## CHAPTER V.

## THE SECOND CRUISE OF THE WAVE.

“ I long’d to see the Isles that gem  
Old Ocean’s purple diadem,  
I sought by turns, and saw them all.”

*Bride of Abydos.*

THE puncture in Mr Bang’s neck from the boarding-pike was not very deep, still it was an ugly lacerated wound ; and if he had not, to use his own phrase, been somewhat bull-necked, there is no saying what the consequences might have been.

“ Tom, my boy,” said he, after the doctor was done with him, “ I am nicely coopered now—nearly as good as new—a little stiffish or so—lucky to have such a comfortable coating of muscle, otherwise the *carotid* would have been in danger. So come here, and take your turn, and I will hold the candle.”

It was dead calm, and as I had desired the cabin to be again used as a cockpit, it was at this time full of poor fellows, waiting to have their wounds dressed, whenever the surgeon could go below. The lantern was brought, and sitting down on a wadding tub, I stripped. The ball, which I knew had lodged in the fleshy part of my left shoulder, had first of all struck me right over the collar-bone, from which it had glanced, and then buried itself in the muscle of the arm, just below the skin, where it stood out, as if it had been a sloe both in shape and colour.

The collar-bone was much shattered, and my chest was a good deal shaken, and greatly bruised ; but I had perceived nothing of all this at the time I was shot ; the sole perceptible sensation was the feeling of cold water running down, and the pinch in the shoulder, as already described. I was much surprised (every man who has been seriously hit being entitled to expatiate) with the extreme smallness of the puncture in the skin through which the ball had entered ; you could not have forced a pea through it, and there was scarcely any flow of blood.

“ A very simple affair this, sir,” said the surgeon, as he made a minute incision right over the ball, the instrument cutting into the cold dull lead with a *cheep*, and then pressing his fingers, one on each side of it, it jumped out nearly into Aaron’s mouth.

“ A pretty sugar-plum, Tom—if that collar-bone of yours had not been all the harder, you would have been embalmed in a gazette, to use your own favourite expression. But, my good boy, your bruise on the chest is serious ; you must go to bed, and take care of yourself.”

Alas ! there was no bed for me to go to. The cabin was occupied by the wounded, where the surgeon was still at work. Out of our small crew, nine had been killed, and eleven wounded, counting passengers—twenty out of forty-two—a fearful proportion.

The night had now fallen.

“ Pearl, send some of the people aft, and get a spare square-sail from the sailmaker, and”——

“ Will the awning not do, sir ? ”

“ To be sure it will,” said I—it did not occur to me. “ Get the awning triced up to the stancheons, and tell my steward to get the beds on deck—a few flags to shut us in will make the thing complete.”

“ It was done ; and while the sharp cries of the wounded,

who were immediately under the knife of the doctor, and the low moans of those whose wounds had been dressed, or were waiting their turn, reached our ears distinctly through the small skylight, our beds were arranged on deck, under the shelter of the awning, a curtain of flags veiling our quarters from the gaze of the crew. Paul Gelid and Pepperpot occupied the starboard side of the little vessel; Aaron Bang and myself the larboard. By this time it was close on eight o'clock in the evening. I had merely looked in on our friends, ensconced as they were in their temporary hurricane house; for I had more work than I could accomplish on deck in repairing damages. Most of our standing, and great part of our running rigging, had been shot away, which the tired crew were busied in splicing and knotting the best way they could. Our mainmast was very badly wounded close to the deck. It was fished as scientifically as our circumstances admitted. The foremast had fortunately escaped—it was untouched; but there were no fewer than thirteen round shot through our hull, five of them between wind and water.

When every thing had been done which ingenuity could devise, or the most determined perseverance execute, I returned to our canvass-shed aft, and found Mr Wagtail sitting on the deck, arranging, with the help of my steward, the supper equipment to the best of his ability. Our meal, as may easily be imagined, was frugal in the extreme—salt beef, biscuit, some roasted yams, and cold grog—some of Aaron's excellent rum. But I mark it down, that I question if any one of the four who partook of it, ever made so hearty a supper before or since. We worked away at the junk until we had polished the bone, clean as an elephant's tusk, and the roasted yams disappeared in bushelsful; while the old rum sank in

the bottle, like mercury in the barometer indicating an approaching gale.

"I say, Tom," quoth Aaron, "how do you feel, my boy?"

"Why, not quite so buoyant as I could wish. To me it has been a day of fearful responsibility."

"And well it may," said he. "As for myself, I go to rest with the tremendous consciousness that even I, who am not a professional butcher, have this blessed day shed more than one fellow-creature's blood—a trembling consideration—and all for what, Tom? You met a big ship in the dark, and desired her to stop. She said she would not—You said 'You shall.'—She rejoined, 'I'll be d——d if I do.' And thereupon you set about compelling her; and certainly you have interrupted her course to some purpose, at the trivial cost of the lives of *only* five or six hundred human beings, whose hearts were beating cheerily in their bosoms within these last six hours, but whose bodies are now food for fishes."

I was stung. "At your hands, my dear sir, I did not expect this, and"—

"Hush," said he, "I don't blame *you*—it is all right; but why will not the Government at home arrange by treaty that this nefarious trade should be entirely put down? Surely all our victories by sea and land might warrant our stipulating for *so* much, in place of hugging-mugging with doubtful ill-defined treaties, specifying that you *Johnny Crapeau*, and you *Jack Spaniard*, shall steal men, and deal in human flesh, in such and such a degree of latitude *only*, while, if you pick up one single slave a league to the northward or southward of the prescribed line of coast, then we shall blow you out of the water wherever we meet you. Why should poor devils, who live in one degree of latitude, be allowed to be kidnapped, whilst we make it felony to steal their immediate



neighbours?" Aaron waxed warm as he proceeded—"Why will not Englishmen lend a hand to put down the slave-trade amongst our opponents in sugar growing, before they so recklessly endeavour to crush slavery in our own worn-out colonies, utterly regardless of our rights and lives? Mind, Tom, I don't defend slavery, I sincerely wish we could do without it, but am I to be the only one to pay the piper in compassing its extinction? If, however, it really *be* that Upas-tree, under whose baleful shade every kindly feeling in the human bosom, whether of master or servant, withers and dies, I ask, who planted it? If it possess the magical, and incredible, and most pestilential quality, that the English gentleman, who shall be virtuous and beneficent, and just in all his ways, *before he leaves home*, and *after he returns home*, shall, during his temporary sojourn within its influence, become a very Nero for cruelty, and have his warm heart of flesh smuggled out of his bosom, by some *hocus pocus*, utterly unintelligible to any unprejudiced rational being, or indurated into the flint of the *nether* millstone, or frozen into a lump of ice"—

"Lord!" ejaculated Wagtail, "only fancy a snowball in a man's stomach, and in Jamaica too!"

"Hold your tongue, Waggy, my love," continued Aaron; "if all this were so, I would again ask, who planted it?—say not that *we* did it—I am a planter, but I did not plant slavery. I found it growing and flourishing, and fostered by the Government, and made my home amongst the branches like a respectable *corbie* *craw*, or a pelican in a wild-duck's nest, with all my pretty little tender black *branchers* hopping about me, along with numberless other unfortunates, and now find that the tree is being uprooted by the very hands that planted and nourished it, and seduced me to live in it, and all"—

I laughed aloud—"Come, come, my dear sir, you are a perfect Lord Castlereagh in the *congruity* of your figures. How the deuce can any living thing exist among the poisonous branches of the Upas-tree—or a wild-duck build"——

"Get along with your criticism, Tom—and don't laugh, hang it, don't laugh—but who told you that a corbie cannot?"

"Why *there are* no corbies in Java."

"Pah—botheration—there are pelicans then; but you know it is not an *Upas*-tree, you know it is all a chimera, and, like the air-drawn dagger of Macbeth, 'that there is no such thing.' Now, that is a good burst, Gelid, my lad, a'nt it?" said Bang, as he drew a long breath, and again launched forth.

"Our Government shall quarrel about sixpence here or sixpence there of discriminative duty in a foreign port, while they have clapped a knife to our throats, and a flaming fagot to our houses, by absurd edicts and fanatical intermeddling with our own colonies, where the slave-trade has notoriously, and to their own conviction, entirely ceased; while, I say it again, they will not put out their little finger to prevent, nay, they calmly look on, and permit a traffic utterly repugnant to all the best feelings of our nature, and baneful to an incalculable degree to our own West Indian possessions; provided, forsooth, the slaves be stolen within certain limits, which, as no one can prove, naturally leads to this infernal contraband, the suppression of which—Lord, what a thing to think of!—has nearly deprived the world of the invaluable services of me, Aaron Bang, Esquire, Member of Council of the Island of Jamaica, and Custos Rotulorum Populorum Jig of the Parish of"——

"Lord," said Wagtail, "why, the yam is not half done."

"But the rum *is*—ah!" drawled Gelid.

"D—n the yam and the rum too," rapped out Bang. "Why, you belly-gods, you have interrupted such a torrent of eloquence!"

I began to guess that our friends were waxing peppery. "Why, gentlemen, I don't know how *you* feel, but *I* am regularly done up—it is quite calm, and I hope we shall all sleep, so good-night."

We nestled in, and the sun had risen before I was called next morning. I hope

"I rose a sadder and a wiser man,  
Upon that morrow's morn."

"On deck, there," said I, while dressing. Mr Peter Swop, one of the Firebrand's master-mates, and now, in consequence of poor Handlead's death, acting-master of the Wave, popped in his head through the opening in the flags. "How is the weather, Mr Swop?"

"Calm all night, sir; not a breath stirring, sir."

"Are the sails shifted?" said I, "and the starboard main-shrouds replaced?"

"They are not yet, sir; the sails are on deck, and the rigging is now stretching, and will be all ready to be got over the masthead by breakfast-time, sir."

"How is her head?"

"Why," rejoined Swop, "it has been boxing all round the compass, sir, for these last twelve hours; at present it is north-east."

"Have we drifted much since last night, Mr Swop?"

"No, sir—much where we were. There are several pieces of wreck, and three dead bodies floating close to, sir."

By this time I was dressed, and had gone from under the awning on deck. The first thing I did was to glance

my eye over the nettings, and there perceived on our quarter, three dead bodies, as Mr Swop had said, floating—one a white Spaniard, and the other the corpses of two unfortunate Africans, who had perished miserably when the brig went down. The white man's remains, swollen as they were, from the heat of the climate, and sudden putrefaction consequent thereon, floated quietly within pistol-shot, motionless and still; but the bodies of the two negroes were nearly hidden by the clustering sea-birds which had perched on them. There were at least two dozen shipped on each carcass, busy with their beaks and claws, while, on the other hand, the water in the immediate neighbourhood seemed quite alive, from the rushing and walloping of numberless fishes, who were tearing the prey piecemeal. The view was any thing but pleasant, and I naturally turned my eyes forward to see what was going on in the bows of the schooner. I was startled from the number of black faces which I saw.

“Why, Mr Tailtackle, how many of these poor creatures have we on board?”

“There are fifty-nine, sir, under hatches in the forehold,” said Timothy, “and thirty-five on deck; but I hope we shan't have them long, sir. It looks like a breeze to windward. We shall have it before long, sir.”

At this moment Mr Bang came on deck.

“Lord, Tom, I thought it was a flea-bite last night, but, mercy, I am as stiff and sore as a gentleman need be. How do *you* feel? I see you have one of your fins in a sling—eh?”

“I am a little stiff, certainly; however, that will go off; but come forward here, my dear sir; come here, and look at this shot-hole—saw you ever any thing like that?”

This was the smashing of one of our pumps from a round shot, the splinters from which were stuck into the

bottom of the launch, which overhung it, forming really a figure very like the letter A.

“Don’t take it to myself, Tom—no, not at all.”

At this moment the black savages on the forecastle discovered our friend, and shouts of “Sheik Cocoloo” rent the skies. Mr Bang, for a moment, appeared startled; so far as I could judge, he had forgotten that part of his exploit, and did not know what to make of it, until at last the actual meaning seemed to flash on him, when, with a shout of laughter, he bolted in through the opening of the flags to his former quarters below the awning. I descended to the cabin, breakfast having been announced, and sat down to our meal, confronted by Paul Gelid and Pepperpot Wagtail. Presently we heard Aaron sing out, the small scuttle being right overhead, “Pegtop, come here, Pegtop, I say, help me on with my neckcloth—so—that will do; now I shall go on deck. Why, Pearl, my boy, what do you want,” and before Pearl could get a word in, Aaron continued, “I say, Pearl, go to the other end of the ship, and tell your Coromantee friends that it is all a humbug—that I am *not* the Sultan Cocoloo; furthermore, that I have not a feather in my tail like a palm branch, of the truth of which I offer to give them ocular proof.”

Pearl made his salaam. “Oh, sir, I fear that we must not say too much on that subject; we have not irons for one half of them savage negirs;” the fellow was as black as a coal himself; “and were they to be undeceived, why, reduced as our crew is, they might at any time rise on, and massacre the whole watch.”

“The devil!” we could hear friend Aaron say; “oh, then, go forward, and assure them that I am a bigger ostrich than ever, and I shall astonish them presently, take my word for it. Pegtop, come here, you scoundrel,”

he continued; "I say, Pegtop, get me out my uniform coat,"—our friend was a captain of Jamaica militia—"so—and my sword—that will do—and here, pull off my trowsers, it will be more classical to perambulate in my shirt, in case it really be necessary to persuade them that the palm branch was all a figure of speech. Now, my hat—there—walk before me, and fan me with the top of that herring barrel."

This was a lid of one of the wadding-tubs, which, to come up to Jigmaree's notions of neatness, had been fitted with covers, and forth stumped Bang, preceded by Pegtop doing the honours. But the instant he appeared from beneath the flags, the same wild shout arose from the captive slaves forward, and such of them as were not fettered, immediately began to bundle and tumble round our friend, rubbing their flat noses and woolly heads all over him, and taking hold of the hem of his garment, whereby his personal decency was so seriously periled, that, after an unavailing attempt to shake them off, he fairly bolted, and ran for shelter once more under the awning, amidst the suppressed mirth of the whole crew, Aaron himself laughing louder than any of them all the while. "I say, Tom, and fellow-sufferers," quoth he, after he had run to earth under the awning, and looking down the scuttle into the cabin where we were at breakfast, "how am I to get into the cabin? if I go out on the quarterdeck but one arm's length, in order to reach the companion, these barbarians will be at me again. Ah, I see"—

Whereupon, without more ado, he stuck his legs down through the small hatch right over the breakfast table, with the intention of descending, and the first thing he accomplished, was to pop his foot into a large dish of scalding hominy, or hasty-pudding, made of Indian corn



meal, with which Wagtail was in the habit of commencing his stowage at breakfast. But this proving too hot for comfort, he instantly drew it out, and in his attempt to reascend, he stuck his bespattered toe into Paul Gelid's mouth. "Oh! oh!" exclaimed Paul, while little Wagtail lay back laughing like to die; but the next instant Bang gave another struggle, or wallop, like a *pelloch* in shoal-water, whereby Pepperpot borrowed a good kick on the side of the head, and down came the *Great Ostrich*, Aaron Bang, but without any feather in his tail, as I can avouch, slap upon the table, smashing cups and saucers, and hominy, and devil knows what all, to pieces, as he floundered on the board. This was so absurd, that we were all obliged to give uncontrolled course to our mirth for a minute or two, when, making the best of the wreck, we contrived to breakfast in tolerable comfort.

Soon after the meal was finished, a light air enabled us once more to lie our course, and we gradually crept to the northward, until twelve o'clock in the forenoon, after which time it fell calm again. I went down to the cabin; Bang had been overhauling my small library, when a shelf gave way (the whole affair having been injured by a round shot in the action, which had torn right through the cabin), so down came several scrolls, rolled up, and covered with brown paper.

"What are all these?" I could hear our friend say.

"They are my logs," said I.

"Your what?"

"My private journals."

"Oh, I see," said Aaron. "I will have a turn at them, with your permission. But what is this so carefully bound with red tape, and sealed, and marked—let me see, 'Thomas Cringle, his log-book.'"

He looked at me.—"Why, my dear sir, to say the

truth, this is my first attempt ; full of trash, believe me ; —what else could you expect from so mere a lad as I was when I wrote it ? ”

“ ‘The child is father to the man,’ Tom, my boy ; so, may I peruse it ? may I read it for the edification of my learned allies,—Pepperpot Wagtail, and Paul Gelid, esquires ? ”

“ Certainly,” I replied, “ no objection in the world, but you will laugh at me, I know ; still, do as you please, only, had you not better have your wound dressed first ? ”

“ My wound ! Poo, poo ! just enough to swear by—a flea-bite—never mind it ; so here goes ”—and he read aloud what is detailed in the “ Launching of the Log,” making his remarks with so much *naïveté*, that I daresay the reader will be glad to hear a few of them. His anxiety, for instance, when he read of the young aide-de-camp being shot and dragged by the stirrup,\* to know “ what became of the *empty* horse,” was very entertaining ; and when he had read the description of Davoust’s face and person, where I describe his nose “ as neither fine nor dumpy—a fair enough proboscis as noses go,”—he laid down the Log with the most laughable seriousness.

“ Now,” quoth he, “ very inexplicit all this, Tom. “ Why, I am most curious in noses. I judge of character altogether from the nose. I never lose sight of a man’s snout, albeit I never saw the tip of my own. You may rely on it, that it is all a mistake to consider the regular Roman nose, with a curve like a shoemaker’s paring knife, or the straight Grecian, with a thin transparent ridge, that you can see through, or the Deutsch *meer-schaum*, or the Saxon pump-handle, or the Scotch *mull*, or any other nose, *that can be taken hold of*, as the standard gnomon. No, no ; I never saw a man with a large nose who was not a blockhead—eh ! Gelid, my love ?

\* Vol. i. page 26.

But *allons*.”—And where, having introduced the German refugees to Captain Deadeye, I go on to say that I thereupon dived into the midshipmen’s berth for a morsel of comfort, and was soon “far into the secrets of a pork pie,”\*—he lay back, and exclaimed with a long drawling emphasis—“A pork pie!”

“A pork pie!” said Paul Gelid.

“Why, do you know,” said Mr Wagtail—“I—why, I never *in all my life* saw a pork pie.”

“My dear Pepperpot,” chimed in Gelid, “we both forget. Don’t you remember the day we dined with the Admiral at the pen, in July last?”

“No,” said Wagtail, “I totally forget it.” Bang, I saw, was all this while chuckling to himself—“I absolutely forget it altogether.”

“Bless me,” said Gelid, “don’t you remember the beautiful calipeever we had that day?”

“Really I do not,” said Pepperpot, “I have had so many good feeds there.”

“Why,” continued Gelid, “Lord love you, Wagtail, not remember that calipeever, so crisp in the broiling?”

“No,” said Wagtail, “really I do not.”

“Lord, man, *it had a pudding in its belly*.”

“Oh, *now* I remember,” said Wagtail.

Bang laughed outright, and I could not help making a hole in my manners also, even prepared as I was for my jest by my sable crony Pegtop.—To proceed.

Aaron looked at me with one of his quizzical grins; “Cringe, my darling, do you keep these Logs still?”

“I do, my dear sir, invariably.”

“What,” struck in little Wagtail, “the deuce!—for instance shall I, and Paul, and Aaron there, all be embalmed or preserved” (“Say pickled,” quoth the latter) “in

these said Logs of yours?" This was too absurd, and I could not answer my allies for laughing. As for Gelid, he had been swaying himself backwards and forwards, half asleep, on the hind legs of his chair all this while, puffing away at a cigar.

"Ah!" said he, half asleep, and but partly overhearing what was going on; "ah, Tom, my dear, you don't say that we shall all be handed down to our poster"—a long yawn—"to our poster"—another yawn—when Bang, watching his opportunity as he sat opposite, gently touched one of the fore-legs of the balanced chair with his toe, while he finished Gelid's sentence by interjecting, "iors," as the conch fell back and floundered over on his stern; his tormentor drawling out in wicked mimicry—

"Yes, dear Gelid, so sure as you have been landed down on your posteriors *now*—ah—you shall be handed down *to* your posterity *hereafter*, by that pestilent little scamp Cringle. Ah, Tom, I know you.—Paul, Paul, it will be *paulo post futurum* with you, my lad."

Here we were interrupted by my steward's entering with his tallow face. "Dinner on the table, sir." We adjourned accordingly.

After dinner we carried on very much as usual, although the events of the previous day had their natural effect; there was little mirth, and no loud laughter. Once more we all turned in, the calm still continuing, and next morning after breakfast, friend Aaron took to the Log again.

But the most amusing exhibition took place when he came to the description of the row in the dark stair at the agent's house, where the negroes fight for the scraps, and capsize Treenail, myself, and the brown lady, down the steps.\*

\* Vol. i. page 70.

“ Why, I say, Tom,” again quoth Aaron, “ I never knew before, that you were in Jamaica at the period you here write of.”

“ Why, my dear sir, I scarcely can say that I was there, my visit was so hurried.”

“ Hurried !” rejoined he, “ hurried—by no means ; were you not in the island for four or five hours ? Ah, long enough to have authorized your writing an anti-slavery pamphlet of one hundred and fifty pages.”

I smiled.

“ Oh, you may laugh, my boy, but it is true—what a subject for an anti-slavery lecture—listen and be instructed.” Here our friend shook himself as a bruiser does to ascertain that all is right before he throws up his guard, and for the first five minutes he only jerked his right shoulder this way and his left shoulder t’other way, while his fins walloped down against his sides like empty sleeves ; at length, as he warmed, he stretched forth his arms like Saint Paul in the Cartoon—and although he now and then could not help sticking his tongue in his cheek, still the exhibition was so true and so exquisitely comical, that I never shall forget it.—“ The whole white inhabitants of Kingston are luxurious monsters, living in more than Eastern splendour ; and their universal practice, during their magnificent repasts, is to entertain themselves, by compelling their black servants to belabour each other across the pate with silver ladles, and to stick drumsticks of turkeys down each other’s throats. Merciful heaven !—only picture the miserable slaves, each with the spaul of a turkey sticking in his gob ; dwell upon that, my dearly beloved hearers, dwell upon that—and then let those who have the atrocious hardihood to do so, speak of the kindness of the planters’ hearts. Kindliness ! kindness ! to cram the leg of a turkey down

a man's throat, while his yoke-fellow in bondage is fracturing his tender woolly skull—for all negroes, as is well known, have craniums, much thinner, and more fragile than an egg-shell—with so tremendous a weapon as a silver ladle? Ay, a silver ladle!!! Some people make light of a silver ladle as an instrument of punishment—it is spoken of as a very slight affair, and that the blows inflicted by it are mere child's play. If any of you, my beloved hearers, labour under this delusion, and will allow me, for your edification, to hammer you about the chops with one of the aforesaid silver soup-ladles of those yellow tyrants for one little half hour, I pledge myself the delusion shall be dispelled once and for ever. Well then, after this fearful scene has continued for I dare not say how long—the black butler—ay, the black butler, a slave himself—oh, my friends, even the black butlers are slaves—the very men who minister the wine in health which maketh their hearts glad, and the castor oil in sickness, which maketh them any thing but of a cheerful countenance—this very black butler is desired, on peril of having a drumstick stuck into his own gizzard also, and his skull fractured by the aforesaid *iron* ladles—red hot, it may be—ay, and who shall say they are not full of *molten lead*? yes, molten lead—does not our reverend brother Lachrimæ Roarem say that the ladles *might* have been full of molten lead, and what evidence have we on the other side, that they *were not full* of molten lead? Why, none at all, none—nothing but the oaths of all the naval and military officers who have ever served in these pestilent settlements; and of all the planters and merchants in the West Indies, the interested planters—those planters who suborn all the navy and army to a man—those planters whose molasses is but another name for human blood. (Here a large puff and blow, and a swabi-



fication of the white handkerchief, while the congregation blow a flourish of trumpets.) My friends—(another puff)—my friends—we all know, my friends, that bullocks' blood is largely used in the sugar refineries in England; but, alas, there is no bullocks' blood used in the refineries in the West Indies. This I will prove to you on the oath of six dissenting clergymen. No. What then is the inference? Oh, is it not palpable? Do you not every day, as jurors, hang men on circumstantial evidence? Are not many of yourselves hanged and transported every year, on the simple fact being proved, of your being found stooping down in pity over some poor fellow with a broken head, with your hands in his breeches pockets in order to help him up? And can *you* fail to draw the proper inference in the present case? Oh, no! no! my friends, *it is the blood of the negroes* that is used in these refining pandemoniums—of the poor negroes, who are worth one hundred pounds a-piece to their masters, and on whose health and capacity for work these same planters absolutely and entirely depend."

Here our friend gathered all his energies, and began to roar like a perfect bull of Bashan, and to swing his arms about like the sails of a windmill, and to stamp and jump, and lollop about with his body as he went on.

"Well, this butler, this poor black butler—this poor black slave butler—this poor black Christian slave butler—for he may have been a Christian, and most likely was a Christian, and indeed must have been a Christian—is enforced, after all the cruelties already related, on pain of being choked with the leg of a turkey himself, and having molten lead poured down his own throat, to do what?—who would not weep?—to—to—to chuck each of his fellow-servants, poor miserable creatures! each with a bone in his throat, and molten lead in his belly, and a

fractured skull—to chuck them, neck and croup, one after another, down a dark staircase, a pitch-dark staircase, amidst a chaos of plates and dishes, and the hardest and most expensive china, and the finest cut crystal—that the wounds inflicted may be the keener—and silver spoons, and knives, and forks. Yea, my Christian brethren, carving-knives and pitchforks right down on the top of their brown mistresses, who are thereby invariably bruised like the clown in the pantomime—at least as I am told he is, for *I* never go to such profane places—oh, no!—bruised as flat as pancakes, and generally murdered outright on the spot. Last of all, the landlord gets up, and kicks the miserable butler himself down after his mates, into the very heart of the living mass; and this not once and away, but every day in the week, Sundays not excepted. Oh, my dear, dear hearers, can you—can you, with your fleshly hearts thumping and bumping against your small ribs, forget the black butler, and the mulatto concubines, and the pitchforks, and the iron ladles full of molten lead? My feelings overpower me, I must conclude. Go in peace, and ponder these things in your hearts, and pay your sixpences at the doors.—*Exeunt omnes*, piping their eyes, and blowing their noses.”

Our shouts of laughter interrupted our friend, who never moved a muscle.

Again, where old Crowfoot asks his steward—“How does the privateer *lay*?”\*

“There again now,” said Aaron, with an irritable *girn*,—“why, Tom, your style is most pestilent—you *lay* here, and you *lay* there—are you sure that you are not a hen, Tom?”

One more touch at Massa Aaron, and I have done. After coming to the description of the horrible carnage

that the fire from the transport caused on the privateer's deck before she sheered off,\* I remarked,—“I never recall that early and dismal scene to my recollection,—the awful havoc created on the schooner's deck by our fire, the struggling, and crawling, and wriggling of the dark mass of wounded men, as they endeavoured, fruitlessly, to shelter themselves from our guns, even behind the dead bodies of their slain shipmates—without conjuring up a very fearful and harrowing image.”

“Were you ever at Biggleswade, my dear sir?”

“To be sure I was,” said Mr Bang.

“Then did you ever see an eel-pot with the water drawn off, when the snake-like fish were twining, and twisting, and crawling, like Brobdingnag maggots, in living knots, a horrible and disgusting mass of living abomination, amidst the filthy slime at the bottom?”

“Ach—have done, Tom—hang your similes. Can't you cut your coat by me, man? Only observe the delicacy of mine.”

“The corbie craw, for instance,” said I, laughing.

“Ever at Biggleswade!” struck in Paul Gelid. “Ever at Biggleswade! Lord love you, Cringle, we have all been at Biggleswade. Don't you know,” (how he conceived I should have known, I am sure I never could tell,) “don't you know that Wagtail and I once made a voyage to England, ay, in the hurricane months, too—ah—for the express purpose of eating eels there—and Lord, Tom, my dear fellow,” (here he sunk his voice into a most dolorous key,) “let me tell you that we were caught in a hurricane in the Gulf, and very nearly lost, when, instead of eating eels, sharks would have eaten us—ah—and at length driven into Havannah—ah. And when we did get home”—(here I thought my excellent

friend would have cried outright)—“ Lord, sir ! we found that the *fall* was not the season to eat eels in after all—ah—that is, in perfection. But we found out from Whiffle, whom we met in town, and who had learned it from the guard of the North mail, that one of the last season’s pots was still on hand at Biggleswade ; so down we trundled in the mail that very evening.”

“ And don’t you remember the awful cold I caught that night, being obliged to go outside ?” quoth Waggy.

“ Ah, and so you did, my dear fellow,” continued his ally.

“ But gracious—on alighting, we found that the agent of a confounded gormandizing Lord Mayor had that very evening boned the entire contents of the only remaining pot, for a cursed livery dinner—ah. Eels, indeed ! we got none but those of the new catch, full of mud, and tasting of mud and red worms. Wagtail was really very ill in consequence—ah.”

Pepperpot had all this while listened with mute attention, as if the narrative had been most moving, and I question not he thought so ; but Bang—oh, the rogue !—looked also very grave and sympathizing, but there was a laughing devil in his eye, that showed he was inwardly enjoying the beautiful *rise* of his friends.

We were here interrupted by a hail from the look-out man at the masthead,—“ Land right a-head.”

“ What does it look like ?” said I.

“ It makes in low hummocks, sir. Now I see houses on the highest one.”

“ Hurrah, Nassau, New Providence, ho !”

Shortly after we made the land about Nassau, the breeze died away, and it fell nearly calm.

“ I say, Thomas,” quoth Aaron, “ for this night at least we must still be your guests, and lumber you on board of your seventy-four. No chance, so far as I see, of getting

into port to-night ; at least if we do, it will be too late to go on shore."

He said truly, and we therefore made up our minds to sit down once more to our rough and round dinner, in the small, hot, choky cabin of the Wave. As it happened, we were all in high glee. I flattered myself that my conduct in the late affair would hoist me up a step or two on the roaster for promotion, and my excellent friends were delighted at the idea of getting on shore.

After the cloth had been drawn, Mr Bang opened his fire.

"Tom, my boy, I respect your service, but I have no great ambition to belong to it. I am sure no bribe that I am aware of could ever tempt me to make 'my home upon the deep,'—and I really am not sure that it is a very gentlemanly calling after all.—Nay, don't look glum ;—what I meant was, the egregious weariness of spirit you must all undergo from consorting with the same men day after day, hearing the same jokes repeated for the hundredth time, and, whichever way you turn, seeing the same faces morning, noon, and night, and listening to the same voices. Oh ! I should die in a year's time were I to become a sailor."

"But," rejoined I, "you have your land bores in the same way that we have our sea bores ; and we have this advantage over you, that if the devil should stand at the door, *we* can always escape from them sooner or later, and can buoy up our souls with the certainty that we can so escape from them at the end of the cruise at the farthest ; whereas if you happen to have taken root amidst a colony of bores on shore, why *you* never can escape, unless you sacrifice all your temporalities for that purpose ;—ergo, my dear sir, *our* life has its advantages, and *yours* has its disadvantages."



“Too true—too true,” rejoined Mr Bang. “In fact, judging from my own small experience, *Borism* is fast attaining a head it never reached before. Speechifying is the crying and prominent vice of the age. Why will the ganders not recollect that eloquence is the gift of heaven, Thomas? A man may improve it unquestionably, but the Promethean fire, the electrical spark, must be from on high. No mental perseverance or education could ever have made a Demosthenes, or a Cicero, in the ages long past; nor an Edmund Burke”——

“Nor an Aaron Bang in times present,” said I.

“Hide my roseate blushes, Thomas,” quoth Aaron, as he continued—“Would that men would speak according to their gifts, study Shakspeare and Don Quixote, and learn of me; and that the real blockhead would content himself with speaking when he is spoken to, drinking when he is *drucken* to, and ganging to the kirk when the bell rings. You never can go into a party nowadays, that you don’t meet with some shallow, prosing, pestilent ass of a fellow, who thinks that empty sound is conversation; and not unfrequently there is a spice of malignity in the blockhead’s composition; but a creature of this calibre you can wither, for it is not worth crushing, by withholding the sunshine of your countenance from it, or by leaving it to drivel on, until the utter contempt of the whole company claps—to change the figure—a wet night-cap as an extinguisher on it, and its small stinking flame flickers and goes out of itself. Then there is your sentimental water-fly, who *blaws* in the *lugs* of the women, and clips the King’s English, and your high-flying dominie body, who *whumles* them outright. I speak in a figure. But all these are as dust in the balance to the wearisome man of ponderous acquirements, the solemn blockhead who usurps the *pas*, and if he happen



to be rich, fancies himself entitled to prose and palaver away, as if he were Sir Oracle, or as if the pence in his purse could ever fructify the *cauld parritch* in his pate into pregnant brain. There is a plateful of P's for you at any rate, Tom. Beautiful exemplification of the art alliterative—an't it?

‘ Oh that Heaven the gift would gie us,  
To see ourselves as others see us !’

My dear boy, speechifying has extinguished conversation. Public meetings, God knows, are rife enough, and why will the numbskulls not confine their infernal dulness to them? why not be satisfied with splitting the ears of the groundlings there? why will they not consider that convivial conversation should be lively as the sparkle of musketry, brilliant, sharp, and sprightly, and not like the thundering of heavy cannon, or heavier *bombs*.—But no—you shall ask one of the Drawleys across the table to take wine. ‘ Ah,’ says he—and how he makes out the concatenation, God only knows—‘ this puts me in mind, Mr Thingumbob, of what happened when I was chairman of the county club, on such a day. Alarming times these were, and deucedly nervous I was when I got up to return thanks. My friends, said I, this unexpected and most unlooked-for honour—this’—— Here blowing all your breeding to the winds, you fire a question across his bows into the fat pleasant fellow, who speaks for society beyond him, and expect to find that the dull sailer has hauled his wind, or dropped astern—(do you twig how nautical I have become in my lingo under Tailtackle’s tuition, Tom?)—but, alas! no sooner has the sparkle of our fat friend’s wit lit up the whole worshipful society, than at the first lull, down comes Drawley again upon you, like a heavy-sterned Dutch dogger, right before the wind—‘ As I was saying—this

unexpected and most unlooked-for honour'—and there you are pinned to the stake, and compelled to stand the fire of all his blunt bird-bolts for half an hour on end. At length his mud has all dribbled from him, and you hug yourself—' Ah,—come, here *is* a talking man opening his fire, so we shall have some conversation at last.' But alas and alack a day ! *Prosey* the second chimes in, and works away, and hems and haws, and hawks up some old scraps of schoolboy Latin and Greek, which are all Hebrew to you, honest man, until at length he finishes off by some solemn twaddle about fossil turnips and vitrified brickbats ; and thus concludes *Fozy* No. 2. Oh, shade of Edie Ochiltree ! that we should stand in the taunt of such unmerciful spendthrifts of our time on earth ! Besides, the devil of it is, that whatever may be said of the flippant *palaverers*, the heavy bores are generally most excellent and amiable men, so that one can't abuse the *sumphs* with any thing like a quiet conscience."

"Come," said I, "my dear sir, you are growing satirical."

"Quarter less three," sung out the leadsman in the chains.

We were now running in past the end of Hog Island to the port of Nassau, where the lights were sparkling brightly. We anchored, but it was too late to go on shore that evening, so, after a parting glass of swizzle, we all turned in for the night.

To be near the wharf, for the convenience of refitting, I had run the schooner close in, being aware of the complete security of the harbour, so that in the night I could feel the little vessel gently take the ground. This awoke me and several of the crew, for accustomed as sailors are to the smooth bounding motion of a buoyant vessel, rising and falling on the heaving bosom of the

ocean, the least touch on the solid ground, or against any hard floating substance, thrills to their hearts with electrical quickness. Through the thin bulkhead I could hear the officers speaking to each other.

“ We are touching the ground,” said one.

“ And if we be, there is no sea here—all smooth—landlocked entirely,” quoth another.

So all hands of us, except the watch on deck, snoozed away once more into the land of deep forgetfulness. We had all for some days previously been overworked, and over-fatigued; indeed, ever since the action had caused the duty of the little vessel to devolve on one half of her original crew, those who had escaped had been subjected to great privations, and were nearly worn out.

It might have been four bells in the middle watch when I was awakened by the *discontinuance* of Mr Swop’s heavy step over head; but judging that the poor fellow might have toppled over into a slight temporary snooze, I thought little of it, persuaded as I was that the vessel was lying in the most perfect safety. In this belief I was falling over once more, when I heard a short startled grunt from one of the men in the steerage,—then a sudden sharp exclamation from another—a louder ejaculation of surprise from a third—and presently Mr Wagtail, who was sleeping on a matrass, spread on the locker below me, gave a spluttering cough. A heavy splash followed, and, simultaneously, several of the men forward shouted out “ Ship full of water—water up to our hammocks ;” while Waggy, who had rolled off his narrow couch, sang out at the top of his pipe, “ I am drowned, Bang. Tom Cringle, my dear,—Gelid, I am drowned—we are all drowned—the ship is at the bottom of the sea, and we shall have eels enough here, if we had none at Biggleswade. Oh ! murder ! murder !”

“Sound the well,” I could hear Taitackle, who had run on deck, sing out.

“No use in that,” I called out, as I splashed out of my warm cot, up to my knees in water. “Bring a light, Mr Taitackle; a bottom plank must have started, or a but, or a hidden-end. The schooner is full of water beyond doubt, and as the tide is still making, stand by to hoist out the boats, and get the wounded into them. But don’t be alarmed, men; the schooner is on the ground, and it is near high-water. So be cool and quiet. Don’t bother now—don’t”—

By the time I had finished my extempore speech I was on deck, where I soon found that, in very truth, there was no use in sounding the well, or manning the pumps either, as some wounded plank had been crushed out bodily by the pressure of the vessel when she took the ground; and there she lay—the tidy little Wave—regularly bilged, with the tide flowing into her.

Every one of the crew was now on the alert. Bedding and bags and some provisions were placed in the boats of the schooner; and several craft from the shore, hearing the alarm, were now alongside; so danger there was none, except that of catching cold, and I therefore bethought me of looking in on my guests in the cabin. I descended and waded into our late dormitory with a candle in my hand, and the water nearly up to my waist. I there found my steward, also with a light, splashing about in the water, catching a stray hat here, and fishing up a spare coat there, and anchoring a chair, with a piece of spunyarn, to the pillar of the small side-berth on the starboard side, while our friend Massa Aaron was coolly lying in his cot on the larboard, the bottom of which was by this time within an inch of the surface of the water, and bestirring himself in an attempt to get his trowsers on, which by

some lucky chance he had stowed away under his pillow overnight, and there he was sticking up first one peg and then another, until by sidling and shifting in his narrow lair, he contrived to rig himself in his nether garments. "But, steward, my good man," he was saying when I entered, "where is my coat, eh?" The man groped for a moment down in the water, which his nose dipped into, with his shirt-sleeves tucked up to his arm-pits, and then held up some dark object, that, to me at least, looked like a piece of black cloth hooked out of a dyer's vat. Alas! this was Massa Aaron's coat; and while the hats were bobbing at each other in the other corner like seventy-fours, with a squadron of shoes in their wakes, and Wagtail was sitting in the side-berth with his wet night-gown drawn about him, his muscular developement in high relief through the clinging drapery, and bemoaning his fate in the most pathetic manner that can be conceived, our ally Aaron exclaimed, "I say, Tom, how do you like the cut of my Sunday coat, eh?" while our friend Paul Gelid, who it seems had slept through the whole row, was at length startled out of his sleep, and sticking one of his long shanks over the side of his cot in act to descend, immersed it in the cold salt brine.

"Lord! Wagtail," he exclaimed, "my dear fellow, the cabin is full of water—we are sinking—ah!—Deucedly annoying to be drowned in this hole, amidst dirty water, like a tubful of ill-washed potatoes—ah."

"Tom—Tom Cringle," shouted Mr Bang at this juncture, while he looked over the edge of his cot on the *stramash* below, "saw ever any man the like of that? Why, see there—there, just under your candle, Tom—a bird's nest floating about with a *mavis* in it, as I am a gentleman."

"D—n your bird's nest and *mavis* too, whatever that

may be," roared little Mr Pepperpot. "By Jupiter, it is my wig, with a live rat in it."

"Confound your wig!—ah," quoth Paul, as the steward fished up what I took at first for a pair of brim-full water-stoups. "Zounds! look at my boots."

"And *confound* both the wig and boots, say I," sung out Mr Bang. "Look at my Sunday coat. Why, who set the ship on *fire*, Tom?"

Here his eye caught mine, and a few words sufficed to explain how we were situated, and then the only bother was how to get ashore, and where we were to sojourn, so as to have our clothes dried, as nothing could now be done until daylight. I therefore got our friends safely into a Nassau boat alongside, with their wet trunks and portmantaus in charge of their black servants, and left them to fish their way to their lodging-house as they best could. By this, our negro captives had been landed, and delivered over to the proper authorities, and the wounded and the sound part of the crew had been placed on board of two merchant brigs, that lay close to us; the masters of them proving accommodating men, I got them alongside, as the tide flowed, one on the starboard, the other on the larboard side, right over the Wave; and next forenoon, when they took the ground, we rigged two spare topmasts from one vessel to another, and making the main and fore-rigging of the schooner fast to them, as the tide once more made, we weighed her, and floated her alongside of the sheer-hulk, against which we were enabled to heave her out, so as to get at the leak, and then by rigging bilge-pumps, we contrived to free her and keep her dry. The damaged plank was soon removed; and, being in a fair way to surmount all my difficulties, about half-past five in the evening I equipped myself in dry clothes, and proceeded on shore to call on our friends at their new domicile.



When I entered, I was shown into the dining-hall by my ally, Pegtop.

“Massa will be here presently, sir.”

“Oh—tell him he need not hurry himself:—But how are Mr Bang and his friends?”

“Oh, dem all wery so so, only Massa Wagtail hab take soch a terrible cold, dat him tink he is going to dead; him wery sorry for himshelf, for true, massa.”

“But where are the gentlemen, Pegtop?”

“All, every one on dem, is in him bed. Wet clothes have been drying all day.”

“And when do they mean to dine?”

Here Pegtop doubled himself up, and laughed like to split himself.

“Dem is all dining in bed, massa. Shall I show you to dem?”

“I shall be obliged; but don’t let me intrude. Give my compliments, and say I have looked in simply to enquire after their health.”

Here Mr Wagtail shouted from the inner apartment.

“Hillo! Tom, my boy! Tom Cringle!—here, my lad, here!”

I was shown into the room from whence the voice proceeded, which happened to be Massa Aaron’s bedroom: and there were my three friends stretched on sofas, in their night-clothes, with a blanket, sheet, and counterpane over each, forming three sides of a square round a long table, on which a most capital dinner was smoking, with wines of several kinds, and a perfect galaxy of wax candles, and their sable valets, in nice clean attire, and smart livery coats, waiting on them.

“Ah, Tom,” quoth Massa Paul, “delighted to see you;—come, *you* seem to have dry clothes on, so take the head of the table.”

I did so ; and broke ground forthwith with great zeal.

“ Tom, a glass of wine, my dear,” said Aaron. “ Don’t you admire us—classical, after the manner of the ancients, eh ? Wagtail’s head-dress, and Paul’s night-cap—oh, the comforts of a woollen one ! Ah, Tom, Tom, the Greeks had no Kilmarnock—none.”

We all carried on cheerily, and Bang began to sparkle.

“ Well, now since you have *weighed* the schooner and *found not much wanting*, I feel my spirits rising again.—A glass of champagne, Tom,—your health, boy.—The dip the old hooker has got must have surprised the rats and cockroaches. Do you know, Tom, I really have an idea of writing a history of the cruise ; only I am deterred from the melancholy consciousness that every blockhead nowadays fancies he can write.”

“ Why, my dear sir, are you not coquetting for a compliment ? Don’t we all know, that many of the crack articles in *Ebony’s Mag* ”——

“ Bah,” clapping his hand on my mouth ; “ hold your tongue ; all wrong in that ”——

“ Well, if it be not you then, I scarcely know to whom to attribute them.—Until lately, I only knew you as the warmhearted West Indian gentleman ; but now I am certain I am to ”——

“ Tom, hold your tongue, my beautiful little man. For, although I must plead guilty to having mixed a little in literary society in my younger days——

‘ Alas ! my heart, those days are *gone*.’

“ Ah, Mr Swop,” continued Mr Bang, as the master was ushered into the room. “ Plate and glasses for Mr Swop.”

The sailor bowed, perched himself on the very edge of his chair, scarcely within long arm’s length of the table,

and sitting bolt upright, as if he had swallowed a spare studdingsail-boom, drank our healths, and smoothed down his hair on his brow.

"Captain, I come to report the schooner ready to"—

"Poo," rattled out Mr Bang; "time for your tale by and by;—help yourself to some of that capital beef, Peter,—so——Yes, my love," continued our friend, resuming his *yarn*. "I once coped even with John Wilson himself. Yea, in the fulness of my powers, I feared not even the Professor."

"Indeed!" said I.

"True, as I am a gentleman. Why, I once, in a public trial of skill, beat him, even *him*, by eighteen measured inches, from toe to heel."

I stared.

"I was the slighter man of the two, certainly. Still, in a flying leap, I always had the best of it, until he astonished the world with the Isle of Palms. From that day forth, my springiness and elasticity left me. 'Fallen was my muscles' brawny vaunt.' I quailed. My genius stood rebuked before him. Nevertheless at *hop-step-and-jump* I was his match still. When out came the City of the Plague! From that hour, the Great Ostrich could not hold the candle to the Flying Philosopher. And now, heaven help me! I can scarcely cover nineteen feet, with every advantage of ground for the run. It is true, the Professor was always in condition, and never required training; now, unless I had time for my hard food, I was seldom in wind."

Mr Peter Swop, emboldened and brightened by the wine he had so industriously swilled, and willing to contribute his quota of conversation, having previously jum-

bled in his noddle what Mr Bang had said about an ostrich, and hard food, asked across the table—

“Do you believe ostriches eat iron, Mr Bang?”

Mr Bang slowly put down his glass, and looking with the most imperturbable seriousness the innocent master right in the face, exclaimed—

“Ostriches eat iron!—Do I believe ostriches eat iron, did you say, Mr Swop? Will you have the great kindness to tell me if this glass of madeira be poison, Mr Swop? Why, when Captain Cringle there was in the Bight of Benin, from which

‘ One comes out  
Where a hundred go in,’

on board of the—what-d’ye-call-her? I forget her name—they had a tame ostrich, which was the wonder of the whole squadron. At the first go-off it had plenty of food, but at length they had to put it on short allowance of a Winchester bushel of tenpenny nails and a pumpbolt a-day; but their supplies failing, they had even to reduce this quantity, whereby the poor bird, after unavailing endeavours to get at the iron ballast, was driven to pick out the iron bolts of the ship in the clear moonlight nights, when no one was thinking of it; so that the craft would soon have been a perfect wreck. And as the commodore would not hear of the creature being killed, Tom there undertook to keep it on copper bolts and sheathing until they reached Cape Coast. But it would not do; the copper soured on its stomach, and it died. Believe an ostrich eats iron, quotha! But to return to the training for the jump—I used to stick to beef-steaks and a thimbleful of Burton ale; and again I tried the dried knuckle parts of legs of five-year-old black-faced

muttons ; but, latterly, I trained best on birsled peas and whisky"—

"On what?" shouted I in great astonishment. "On what?"

"Yes, my boys ; parched peas and whisky. Charge properly with birsled peas, and if you take a caulker just as you begin your run, there is the linstock to the gun for you, and away you fly through the air on the principle of the Congreve Rocket. Well might that amiable, and venerable, and most learned Theban, Cockibus Bungo, who always held the stakes on these great occasions, exclaim, in his astonishment to *Cheesey*, the Janitor of many days—as

' Like fire from flint I glanced away,'

disdaining the laws of gravitation—

Ερασμὶν πέλεια,  
Πόθεν, πόθεν πέτασαι.

By Mercury, I swear,—yea by his winged heel, I shall have at the Professor yet, if I live, and whisky and birsled peas fail me not."

Here Paul and I laughed outright ; but Mr Wagtail appeared out of sorts somehow ; and Swop looked first at one, and then at another, with a look of the most ludicrous uncertainty as to whether Mr Bang was quizzing him, or telling a verity.

"Why, Wagtail," said Gelid, "what ails you, my boy?"

I looked towards our little amiable fat friend. His face was much flushed, although I learned that he had been unusually abstemious, and he appeared heated and restless, and had evidently feverish symptoms about him.

“Who’s there?” said Wagtail, looking towards the door with a *raised* look.

It was Tailtackle, with two of the boys carrying a litter, followed by Peter Mangrove, as if he had been chief mourner at a funeral. Out of the litter a black paw, with *fishes* or splints whipped round it by a band of spunyarn, protruded, and kept swaying about like a pendulum.

“What have you got there, Mr Tailtackle?”

The gunner turned round.

“Oh, it is a vagary of Peter Mangrove’s, sir. Not contented with getting the doctor to set Sneezer’s star-board foreleg, he insists on bringing him away from amongst the people at the capstan-house.”

“True, massa—Massa Tailtackle say true; de poor dumb dog never shall cure him leg none at all, ’mong de men dere; dey all love him so mosh, and make of him so mosh, and stuff him wid salt wittal so mosh, till him blood inflammation like a hell; and den him so good temper, and so gratify wid dere attention, dat I believe him will eat till him kickeriboo of sorefut, [surfeit I presumed;] and, beside, I know de dog healt will instantly mend if him see you. Oh, Massa Aaron, [our friend was smiling,] it not like you to make fun of poor black fellow, when him is take de part of soch old friend as poor Sneezer. De captain dere cannot laugh, dat is if him will only tink on dat fearful cove at Puerto Escondido, and what Sneezer did for bote of we dere.”

“Well, well, Mangrove, my man,” said Mr Bang, “I will ask leave of my friends here to have the dog bestowed in a corner of the piazza, so let the boys lay him down there, and here is a glass of grog for you—so.—Now go back again,”—as the poor fellow had drank our healths.

Here Sneezer, who had been still as a mouse all this while, put his black snout out of the hammock, and began



to cheep and whine in his gladness at seeing his master, and the large tears ran down his coal-black muzzle as he licked my hand, while every now and then he gave a short fondling bark, as if he had said, "Ah, master, I thought you had forgotten me altogether, ever since the action where I got my leg broke by a grape-shot, but I find I am mistaken."

"Now, Tiltackle, what say you?"

"We may ease off the tackles to-morrow afternoon," said the gunner, "and right the schooner, sir; we have put in a dozen cashaw knees, as tough as leather, and bolted the planks tight and fast. You saw these heavy quarters did us no good, sir; I hope you will beautify her again, now since the Spaniard's shot has pretty well demolished them already. I hope you won't replace them, sir. I hope Captain Transom may see her as she should be, as she was when your honour had your first pleasure cruise in her." Here—but I may have dreamed it—I thought the quid in the honest fellow's cheek stuck out in higher relief than usual for a short space.

"We shall see, we shall see," said I.

"I say, Don Timotheus," quoth Bang, "you don't mean to be off without drinking our healths?" as he tipped him a tumbler of brandy grog of very dangerous strength.

The warrant officer drank it, and vanished, and presently Mr Gelid's brother, who had just returned from one of the *out* islands, made his appearance, and after the greeting between them was over, the stranger advanced, and with much grace invited us *en masse* to his house. But by this time Mr Wagtail was so ill, that we could not move that night, our chief concern now being to see him properly bestowed; and very soon I was convinced that his disease was a violent bilious fever.

The old brown landlady, like all her caste, was a most excellent nurse ; and after the most approved and skilful surgeon of the town had seen him, and prescribed what was thought right, we all turned in. Next morning before any of us were up, a whole plateful of cards were handed to us, and during the forenoon these were followed by as many invitations to dinner. We had difficulty in making our election, but that day I remember we dined at the beautiful Mrs C——'s, and in the evening adjourned to a ball—a very gay affair ; and I do freely avow, that I never saw so many pretty women in a community of the same size before. Oh ! it was a little paradise, and not without its Eve. But such an Eve ! I scarcely think the old Serpent himself could have found it in his heart to have beguiled her.

“ I say, Tom, my dear boy,” said Mr Bang, “ do you see that darling ? Oh, who can picture to himself, without a tear, that such a creature of light, such an ethereal-looking thing, whose step ‘ would ne’er wear out the everlasting flint,’ that floating gossamer on the thin air, shall one day become an anxious-looking, sharp-featured, pale-faced, loud-tongued, thin-bosomed, broad-hipped, wife ! ”

The next day, or rather in the same night, his Majesty's ship *Rabo* arrived, and the first tidings we had of it in the morning were communicated by Captain Queuedechat himself, an honest, uproarious sailor, who chose to begin, as many a worthy ends, by driving up to the door of the lodging in a cart.

“ Is the captain of the small schooner that was swamped, here ? ” he asked of Massa Pegtop.

Free and easy this, thought I.

“ Yes, sir, Captain Cringle is here, but him no get up yet.”

“Oh, never mind, tell him not to hurry himself; but where is the table laid for breakfast?”

“Here, sir,” said Pegtop, as he showed him into the piazza.

“Ah, that will do—so, give me the newspaper,—*told de rol*,” and he began reading and singing, in all the buoyancy of mind consequent on escaping from shipboard after a three months’ cruise.

I dressed and came to him as soon as I could; and the gallant captain, whom I had figured to myself a fine light gossamer lad of twenty-two, stared me in the face as a fat elderly cock of forty at the least; and as to bulk, I would not have guaranteed that eighteen stone could have made him kick the beam. However, he was an excellent fellow, and that day he and his crew were of most essential service in assisting me in refitting the *Wave*, for which I shall always be grateful. I had spent the greater part of the forenoon in my professional duty, but about two o’clock I had knocked off, in order to make a few calls on the families to whom I had introductions, and who were afterwards so signally kind to me. I then returned to our lodgings in order to dress for dinner, before I sallied forth to worthy old Mr N——’s, where we were all to dine, when I met Aaron.

“No chance of our removing to Peter Gelid’s this evening.”

“Why?” I asked.

“Oh, poor Pepperpot Wagtail is become alarmingly ill; inflammatory symptoms have appeared, and”——Here the colloquy was cut short by the entrance of Mrs Peter Gelid—a pretty woman enough. She had come to learn herself from our landlady, how Mr Wagtail was, and with the kindness of the country, she volunteered to visit poor little Waggy in his sick-bed. I did not go into the

room with her; but when she returned, she startled us all a good deal, by stating her opinion that the worthy man was really very ill, in which she was corroborated by the doctor, who now arrived. So soon as the *medico* saw him, he bled him, and after prescribing a lot of effervescing draughts, and various febrifuge mixtures, he left a large blister with the old brown landlady, to be applied over his stomach if the wavering and flightiness did not leave him before morning. We returned early after dinner from Mr N——'s to our lodgings, and as I knew Gelid was expected at his brother's in the evening, to meet a large assemblage of kindred, and as the night was rainy and tempestuous, I persuaded him to trust the watch to me; and as our brown landlady had been up nearly the whole of the previous night, I sent for Taitackle to spell me, while the black valets acted with great assiduity in their capacity of surgeon's mates. About two in the morning Mr Wagtail became delirious, and it was all that I could do, aided by my sable assistants, and an old black nurse, to hold him down in his bed. Now was the time to clap on the blister, but he repeatedly tore it off, so that at length we had to give it up for an impracticable job; and Taitackle, whom I had called from his pallet, where he had gone to lie down for an hour, placed the *caustico*, as the Spaniards call it, at the side of the bed.

"No use in trying this any more at present," said I; "we must wait until he gets quieter, Mr Taitackle; so go to your bed, and I shall lie down on this sofa here, where Marie Paparoche" (this was our old landlady) "has spread sheets, I see, and made all comfortable. And send Mr Bang's servant, will you;" (friend Aaron had ridden into the country after dinner to visit a friend, and the storm, as I conjectured, had kept him there;) "he is fresh, and will call me in case I be wanted, or Mr Wagtail gets worse."

I lay down, and soon fell fast asleep, and I remembered nothing, until I awoke about eleven o'clock next morning, and heard Mr Bang speaking to Wagtail, at whose bedside he was standing.

"Pepperpot, my dear, be thankful—you are quite cool—a fine moisture on your skin this morning—be thankful, my little man—how did your blister rise?"

"My good friend," quoth Wagtail, in a thin weak voice, "I can't tell—I don't know; but this I perceive, that I am unable to rise, whether it has risen or no."

"Ah—weak," quoth Gelid, who had now entered the room.

"Nay," said Pepperpot, "not so weak as deucedly sore, and on a very unromantic spot, my dears."

"Why," said Aaron, "the pit of the stomach is not a very genteel department, nor the abdomen neither."

"Why," said Wagtail, "I have no blister on either of those places, but if it were possible to dream of such a thing, I would say it had been clapped on"—

Here his innate propriety tongue-tied him.

"Eh?" said Aaron; "what—has the *caustico* that was intended for the *frontiers of Belgium* been clapped by mistake on the broad *Pays Bas*?"

And so in very truth it turned out; for while we slept, the patient had risen, and sat down on the blister that lay, as already mentioned, on a chair at his bedside, and again toppling into bed, had fallen into a sound sleep, from which he had but a few moments before the time I write of awoke.

"Why, now," continued Aaron, to the doctor of the Wave who had just entered—"why, here *is* a discovery, my dear doctor. You clap a *hot* blister on a poor fellow's head to *cool* it, but Doctor Cringle there has cooled Master Wagtail's brain, by blistering his stern—eh?—

Make notes, and mind you report this to the College of Surgeons.”\*

I cleared myself of these imputations. Wagtail recovered; our refitting was completed; our wood, and water, and provisions, replenished; and after spending one of the happiest fortnights of my life, in one con-

\* In the manuscript Log forwarded by Mr Bang, who kindly undertakes to correct the proofs during his friend Cringle's absence in the North Sea, there is a leaf wafered in here, with the following in Mr Aaron's own handwriting—

“ Master Tommy has allowed his fancy some small poetical licenses in this his Log. First of all, in chapter ii. of this volume, he lays me out on the table, and makes the scorpion sting me in the night, at Don Ricardo Campana's, whereas the villain himself was the hero of the story, and the man on whom Transom played off his tricks. But not content with this, he makes a bad pun, when speaking of Francesca Cangrejo, which he puts into my mouth, forsooth, as if I had not sins enough of my own to answer for. And, secondly, in the present chapter, why he was himself in very truth the real King of the Netherlands, the integrity of whose low countries was violated, and not poor Wagtail—as thus: Squire Pepperpot, in his delirium, irritated by the part that Cringle had good-naturedly taken in endeavouring to clap the blister on his stomach, watched his opportunity, and when all hands had fallen into a sound sleep, he got up and approached the sofa, where the *nautical* was snoozing. Tom, honest fellow, dreaming no harm, was luxuriating in the genial climate, and sleeping very much as we are given to believe little pigs do, as described in the old song, so that Pepperpot had no difficulty in applying the argument *a posteriori*, and having covered up the sleeping man-of-war, with the *caustico* adhering to his latter end like bird-lime, he retired noiseless as a cat to his own quarters. Time ran on, and when the blister should have *risen* next morning on Wagtail's stomach, Captain Cringle could not *rise*, and the jest went round; but Thomas nevertheless went about as usual, and was the gayest of the gay, dancing and singing; but whenever he dined out, he always carried a *brechum* with him.—This I vouch for.  
—A. B.”



tinued round of gaiety, I prepared to leave—with tears in my eyes, I will confess—the clear waters, bright blue skies, glorious climate, and warmhearted community of Nassau, New Providence. Well might that old villain Blackbeard have made this sweet spot his favourite *rendezvous*. By the way, this same John Teach, or Blackbeard, had fourteen wives in the lovely island; and I am not sure but I could have picked out something approximating to the aforesaid number myself, with time and opportunity, from among such a galaxy of loveliness as then shone and sparkled in this dear little town. Speaking of the pirate Blackbeard, I ought to have related that one morning when I was at breakfast at Mrs C——’s, the amiable, and beautiful, and innocent girl-matron—ay, you supercilious son of a sea-cook, you may turn up your nose at the expression, but if you could have seen the burden of my song\* as I saw her, and felt the elegancies of her manner and conversation as I felt them—but let us stick to Blackbeard, if you please. We were all comfortably seated at breakfast; I had finished my sixth egg, had concealed a beautiful dried snapper, before which even a *rizzard* haddock sank into insignificance, and was bethinking me of finishing off with a slice of Scotch mutton-ham, when in slid Mr Bang. He was received with all possible cordiality, and commenced operations very vigorously.

He was an amazing favourite of our hostess, (as where was he not a favourite?) so that it was some time before he even looked my way. We were in the midst of a discussion regarding the beauty of New Providence, and the West India Islands in general; and I was remarking

\* “*Burden*.—Tom was right here; she was within a week of her confinement.—A. B.”

that nature had been liberal, that the scenery was unquestionably magnificent in the larger islands, and beautiful in the smaller; but there were none of those heart-stirring reminiscences, none of those thrilling electrical associations, which vibrate to the heart at visiting scenes in Europe famous in antiquity—famous as the spot in which recent victories had been achieved—famous even for the very freebooters, who once held unlawful sway in the neighbourhood. “Why, there never has flourished hereabouts, for instance, even one thoroughly melodramatic thief.” Massa Aaron let me go on, until he had nearly finished his breakfast. At length he fired a shot at me.

“I say, Tom, you are expatiating, I see. Nothing heartstirring, say you? In *new* countries it would bother you to have *old* associations certainly; and you have had your Rob Roy, I grant you, and the old country has had her Robin Hood. But has not Jamaica had her Three-fingered Jack? Ay, a more gentlemanlike scoundrel than either of the former. When did Jack refuse a piece of yam, and a cordial from his horn, to the wayworn man, white or black? When did he injure a woman? When did Jack refuse food and a draught of cold water, the greatest boon, in our ardent climate, that he could offer, to a wearied child? Oh, there was much poetry in the poor fellow! And here, had they not that most melodramatic (as you choose to word it) of thieves, *Blackbeard*, before whom *Bluebeard* must for ever hide his diminished head? Why, *Bluebeard* had only one wife at a time, although he murdered five of them, whereas *Blackbeard* had seldom fewer than a dozen, and he was never known to murder above three. But I have fallen in with such a treasure! Oh, such a discovery! I have been communing with Noah himself—with an old negro,

who remembers this very Blackbeard—the pirate Blackbeard.”

“The deuce,” said I; “impossible!”

“But it is true. Why it is only ninety-four years ago since the scoundrel flourished, and this old cock is one hundred and ten. I have jotted it down—worth a hundred pounds. Read, my adorable Mrs C——, read.”

“But, my dear Mr Bang,” said she, “had you not better read it yourself?”

“You, if you please,” quoth Aaron, who forthwith set himself to make the best use of his time.

MEMOIR OF JOHN TEACH, ESQUIRE, VULGARLY CALLED  
BLACKBEARD, BY AARON BANG, ESQUIRE, F.R.S.

——— “He was the mildest manner’d man  
That ever scuttled ship, or cut a throat;  
With such true breeding of a gentleman,  
You never could discern his real thought.  
Pity he loved adventurous life’s variety,  
He was so great a loss to good society.”

John Teach, or Blackbeard, was a very eminent man—a very handsome man, and a very devil amongst the ladies.

He was a Welshman, and introduced the leek into Nassau about the year 1718, and was a very remarkable personage, although, from some singular imperfection in his moral constitution, he never could distinguish clearly between *meum* and *tuum*.

He found his patrimony was not sufficient to support him; and as he disliked agricultural pursuits as much as mercantile, he got together forty or fifty fine young men one day, and *borrowed* a vessel from some merchants that was lying at the Nore, and set sail for the Bahamas. On his way he fell in with several West Indiamen, and,

sending a boat on board of each, he asked them for the *loan* of provisions and wine, and all their gold, and silver, and clothes, which request was in every instance but one civilly acceded to; whereupon, drinking their good healths, he returned to his ship. In the instance where he had been uncivilly treated, to show his forbearance, he saluted them with twenty-one guns; but by some accident the shot had not been withdrawn, so that unfortunately the contumacious ill-bred craft sank, and as Blackbeard's own vessel was very crowded, he was unable to save any of the crew. He was a great admirer of fine air, and accordingly established himself on the Island of New Providence, and invited a number of elegant young men, who were fond of pleasure cruises, to visit him, so that presently he found it necessary to launch forth, in order to *borrow* more provisions.

At this period he was a great dandy; and amongst other vagaries, he allowed his beard to grow a foot long at the shortest, and then plaited it into three strands, indicating that he was a bashaw of no common dimensions. He wore red breeches, but no stockings, and sandals of bullock's hide. He was a perfect Egyptian in his curiousness in fine linen, and his shirt was always white as the driven snow *when* it was clean, which was the first Sunday of every month. In waistcoats he was especially select; but the cut of them very much depended on the fashion in favour with the last gentleman he had *borrowed* from. He never wore any thing but a full dress purple velvet coat, under which bristled three brace of pistols, and two naked stilettoes, only eighteen inches long, and he had generally a lighted match *fizzing* in the bow of his cocked scraper, whereat he lighted his pipe, or fired off a cannon, as pleased him.

One of his favourite amusements, when he got half

slew, was to adjourn to the hold with his compotators, and kindling some brimstone matches, to dance and roar, as if he had been the devil himself, until his allies were nearly suffocated. At another time he would blow out the candles in the cabin, and blaze away with his loaded pistols at random, right and left, whereby he severely wounded the feelings of some of his intimates by the poignancy of his wit, all of which he considered a most excellent joke. But he was kind to his fourteen wives so long as he was sober, as it is known that he never murdered above three of them. His *borrowing*, however, gave offence to our government, no one can tell how; and at length two of our frigates, the Lime and Pearl, then cruising off the American coast, after driving him from his stronghold, hunted him down in an inlet in North Carolina, where, in an eight-gun schooner, with thirty desperate fellows, he made a defence worthy of his honourable life, and fought so furiously that he killed and wounded more men of the attacking party than his own crew consisted of; and following up his success, he boarded, sword in hand, the headmost of the two armed sloops, which had been detached by the frigates, with ninety men on board, to capture him; and being followed by twelve men and his trusty lieutenant, he would have carried her out and out, maugre the disparity of force, had he not fainted from loss of blood, when, falling on his back, he died where he fell, like a hero—

“ His face to the sky, and his feet to the foe”—

leaving eleven forlorn widows, being the fourteen wives *minus* the three that he had throttled.

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“ No chivalrous associations indeed! Match me such a character as this.”

We all applauded to the echo. But I must end my song, for I should never tire in dwelling on the happy days we spent in this most enchanting little island. The lovely blithe girls, and the hospitable kindhearted men, and the children! I never saw such cherubs, with all the sprightliness of the little pale-faced Creoles of the West Indies, while the healthy bloom of Old England blossomed on their cheeks.

"I say, Tom," said Massa Aaron, on one occasion when I was rather tedious on the subject, "all those little *cherubs*, as you call them, at least the most of them, are the offspring of the cotton bales captured in the American war."

"The what?" said I.

"The children of the American war—and I will prove it thus—taking the time from no less an authority than Hamlet, when he chose to follow the great Dictator, Julius Cæsar himself, through all the corruption of our physical nature, until he found him stopping a beer barrel—(only imagine the froth of one of our *disinterested* friend Buxton's beer barrels, savouring of quassia, not hop, fizzing through the clay of Julius Cæsar the Roman!)—as thus: If there had been no Yankee war, there would have been no prize cargoes of cotton sent into Nassau; if there had been no prize cargoes sent into Nassau, there would have been little money made; if there had been little money made, there would have been fewer marriages; if there had been fewer marriages, there would have been fewer cherubs. There is logic for you, my darling."

"Your last is a *non sequitur*, my dear sir," said I, laughing. "But, in the main, Parson Malthus is right, out of Ireland that is, after all."

That evening I got into a small scrape, by impressing three apprentices out of a Scotch brig, and if Mr Bang



had not stood my friend, I might have got into serious trouble. Thanks to him, the affair was soldered.

When on the eve of sailing, having received a letter ordering me to join the Firebrand at Crooked Island, my excellent friends, Messrs Bang, Gelid, and Wagtail, determined, in consequence of letters which they had received from Jamaica, to return home in a beautiful armed brig that was to sail in a few days, laden with flour. I cannot well describe how much this moved me. Young and enthusiastic as I was, I had grappled myself with hooks of steel to Mr Bang; and now, when he unexpectedly communicated his intention of leaving me, I felt more forlorn and deserted than I was willing to plead to.

“My dear boy,” said he, “make my peace with Transom. If urgent business had not pressed me, I would not have broken my promise to rejoin him; but I am imperiously called for in Jamaica, where I hope soon to see you.” He continued, with a slight tremor in his voice, which thrilled to my heart, as it vouched for the strength of his regard,—“If ever I am where you may come, Tom, and you don’t make *my* house *your* home, provided you have not a better of your own, I will never forgive you.” He paused. “You young fellows sometimes spend faster than you should do, and quarterly bills are long of coming round. I have drawn for more money than I want. I wish you would let me be your banker for a hundred pounds, Tom.”

I squeezed his hand. “No, no—many, many thanks, my dear sir—but I never outrun the constable. Good-by, God bless you. Farewell, Mr Wagtail—Mr Gelid, adieu.” I tumbled into the boat and pulled on board. The first thing I did was to send the wine and sea stock, a most exuberant assortment unquestionably, belonging to my Jamaica friends, ashore; but, to my surprise, the

boat was sent back, with Mr Bang's card, on which was written in pencil, "Don't affront us, *Captain Cringle*." Thereupon I got the schooner under weigh, and no event worth narrating turned up until we anchored close to the post-office at Crooked Island, two days after.

We found the Firebrand there, and the post-office mail-boat, with her red flag and white horse in it, and I went on board the corvette to deliver my official letter, detailing the incidents of the cruise, and was most graciously received by my captain.

There was a sail in sight when we anchored, which at first we took for the Jamaica packet ; but it turned out to be the Tinker, friend Bang's flour-loaded brig ; and by five in the evening our allies were all three once more restored to us, but, alas ! so far as regarded two of them, only for a moment. Messrs Gelid and Wagtail, had, on second thoughts, it seems, hauled their wind to lay in a stock of turtle at Crooked Island, and I went ashore with them, and assisted in the selection from the turtle crawls filled with beautiful clear water, and lots of fine lively fresh-caught fish, the postmaster being the turtle-merchant.

"I say, Paul, happier in the fish way here than you were at Biggleswade—eh ?" said Aaron.

After we had completed our purchases, our friends went on board the corvette, and I was invited to meet them at dinner, where the aforesaid postmaster, a stout conch, with a square-cut coatee and red cape and cuffs, was also a guest.

He must have had but a dull time of it, as there were no other white inhabitants, that I saw, on the island besides himself ; his wife having gone to Nassau, which he looked on as the prime city of the world, to be confined, as he told us. Bang said, that she must rather have gone

to be *delivered* from *confinement* ; and, in truth, Crooked Island was a most desolate domicile for a lady ; our friend the postmaster's family, and a few negroes employed in catching turtle, and making salt, and dressing some scrubby cotton-trees, composing the whole population. In the evening the packet did arrive, however, and Captain Transom received his orders.

“ Captain Transom, my boy,” quoth Bang towards nightfall, “ the best of friends must part—we must move—good-night—we shall be off presently—good-by ”—and he held out his hand.

“ Devil a bit,” said Transom ; “ Bang, you shall not go, neither you nor your friends. You promised, in fact shipped with me for the cruise, and Lady —— has my word and honour that you shall be restored to her longing eye, sound and safe—so you must all remain, and send down the flour brig to say you are coming.”

To make a long story short, Massa Aaron was boned, but his friends were obdurate, so we all weighed that night ; the Tinker bearing up for Jamaica, while we kept by the wind, steering for Gonaives in St Domingo.

The third day we were off Cape St Nicholas, and getting a slant of wind from the westward, we ran up the Bight of Leogane all that night, but towards morning it fell calm ; we were close in under the high land, about two miles from the shore, and the night was the darkest I ever was out in anywhere. There were neither moon nor stars to be seen, and the dark clouds settled down, until they appeared to rest upon our mastheads, compressing, as it were, the hot steamy air upon us until it became too dense for breathing. In the early part of the night it had rained in heavy showers now and then, and there were one or two faint flashes of lightning, and some heavy peals of thunder, which rolled amongst the

distant hills in loud shaking reverberations, which gradually became fainter and fainter, until they grumbled away in the distance in hoarse murmurs, like the low notes of an organ in one of our old cathedrals; but now there was neither rain nor wind—all nature seemed fearfully hushed; for where we lay, in the smooth bight, there was no swell, not even a ripple on the glasslike sea; the sound of the shifting of a handspike, or the tread of the men, as they ran to haul on a rope, or the creaking of the rudder, sounded loud and distinct. The sea in our neighbourhood was strongly phosphorescent, so that the smallest chip thrown overboard struck fire from the water, as if it had been a piece of iron cast on flint; and when you looked over the quarter, as I delight to do, and tried to penetrate into the dark clear profound beneath, you every now and then saw a burst of pale light, like a halo, far down in the depths of the green sea, caused by the motion of some fish, or of what Jack, no great natural philosopher, usually calls *blubbers*; and when the dolphin or skip-jack leapt into the air, they sparkled out from the still bosom of the deep dark water like rockets, until they fell again into their element in a flash of fire. This evening the corvette had showed no lights, and although I conjectured she was not far from us, still I could not with any certainty indicate her whereabouts. It might now have been about three o'clock, and I was standing on the aftermost gun on the starboard side, peering into the impervious darkness over the tafferel, with my dear old dog Sneezer by my side, nuzzling and fondling after his affectionate fashion, while the pilot, Peter Mangrove, stood within handspike length of me. The dog had been growling, but all in fun, and snapping at me, when in a moment he hauled off, planted his paws on the rail, looked forth into the night, and gave a short anxious bark, like

the solitary pop of the sentry's musket to alarm the main-guard in outpost work.

Peter Mangrove advanced, and put his arm round the dog's neck. "What you see, my shild?" said the black pilot.

Sneezer uplifted his voice, and gave a long continuous growl.

"Ah!" said Mangrove sharply, "Massa Captain, someting near we—never doubt dat—de dog yeeirie someting we can't yeeirie, and see someting we can't see."

I had lived long enough never to despise any caution, from whatever quarter it proceeded. So I listened, still as a stone. Presently I thought I heard the distant splash of oars. I placed my hand behind my ear, and waited with breathless attention. Immediately I saw the sparkling dip of them in the calm black water, as if a boat, and a large one, was pulling very fast towards us. "Look-out, hail that boat," said I.

"Boat ahoy!" sung out the man to whom I had spoken. No answer. "Coming here?" reiterated the seaman. No better success. The boat or canoe, or whatever it might be, was by this time close aboard of us, within pistol-shot at the farthest—no time to be lost, so I hailed myself, and this time the challenge did produce an answer.

"*Sore boat—fruit and wegitaab.*"

"Shore boat, with fruit and vegetables, at this time of night—I don't like it," said I. "Boatswain's mate,—all hands—pipe away the boarders. Cutlasses, men—quick, a piratical row-boat is close to." And verily we had little time to lose, when a large canoe or row-boat, pulling twelve oars at the fewest, and carrying twenty-five men or thereabouts, swept up on our larboard quarter, hooked

on, and the next moment upwards of twenty unlooked-for visitors scrambled up our shallow-side, and jumped on board. All this took place so suddenly that there were not ten of my people ready to receive them, but those ten were the prime men of the ship.

“Surrender, you scoundrels—surrender. You have boarded a man-of-war. Down with your arms, or we shall kill you to a man.”

But they either did not understand me, or did not believe me, for the answer was a blow from a cutlass, which, if I had not parried with my night-glass, which it broke in pieces, might have effectually stopped my promotion.

“Cut them down, boarders, down with them—they are pirates,” shouted I; “heave cold shot into their boat alongside—all hands, Mr Rouse-em-out,” to the boatswain, “call all hands.”

We closed. The assailants had no firearms, but they were armed with swords and long knives, and as they fought with desperation, several of our people were cruelly haggled; and after the first charge, the combatants on both sides became so blended, that it was impossible to strike a blow, without running the risk of cutting down a friend. By this time all hands were on deck; the boat alongside had been swamped by the cold shot that had been hove crashing through her bottom, when down came a shower from the surcharged clouds, or waterspout—call it which you will—that absolutely deluged the decks, the scuppers being utterly unable to carry off the water. So long as the pirates fought in a body, I had no fears, as, dark as it was, our men, who held together, knew where to strike and thrust; but when the torrent of rain descended in bucketfuls, the former broke away, and were pursued singly into various corners about the deck, all escape being cut off from the swamping of



their boat. Still they were not vanquished, and I ran aft to the binnacle, where a blue light was stowed away,—one of several that we had got on deck to burn that night, in order to point out our whereabouts to the Firebrand. I fired it, and rushing forward cutlass-in-hand, we set on the gang of black desperadoes with such fury, that after killing two of them outright, and wounding and taking prisoners seven, we drove the rest overboard into the sea, where the small-armed men, who by this time had tackled to their muskets, made short work of them, guided as they were by the sparkling of the dark water, as they struck out and swam for their lives. The blue light was immediately answered by another from the corvette, which lay about a mile off; but before her boats, two of which were immediately armed and manned, could reach us, we had defeated our antagonists, and the rain had increased to such a degree, that the heavy drops, as they fell with a strong rushing noise into the sea, flashed it up into one entire sheet of fire.

We secured our prisoners, all blacks and mulattoes, the most villanous-looking scoundrels I had ever seen, and shortly after it came on to thunder and lighten, as if heaven and earth had been falling together. A most vivid flash—it almost blinded me. Presently the Firebrand burnt another blue light, whereby we saw that her maintopmast was gone close by the cap, with the topsail, and upper spars, and yards, and gear, all hanging down in a lumbering mass of confused wreck; she had been struck by the levin brand, which had killed four men, and stunned several more.

By this time the cold grey streaks of morning appeared in the eastern horizon—soon after the day broke; and by two o'clock in the afternoon, both corvette and schooner were at anchor at Gonaives. The village, for

town it could not be called, stands on a low hot plain, as if the washings of the mountains on the left hand side as we stood in had been carried out into the sea, and formed into a white plateau of sand ; all was hot, and stunted, and scrubby. We brought up inside of the corvette, in three fathoms water. My superior officer had made the private signal to come on board and dine. I dressed, and the boat was lowered down, and we pulled for the corvette, but our course lay under the stern of the two English ships that were lying there loading cargoes of coffee.

“ Pray, sir,” said a decent-looking man, who leant on the tafferel of one of them—“ Pray, sir, are you going on board of the commodore ? ”

“ I am,” I answered.

“ I am invited there too, sir ; will you have the kindness to say I will be there presently ? ”

“ Certainly—give way, men.”

Présently we were alongside the corvette, and the next moment we stood on her deck, holystoned white and clean, with my stanch friend Captain Transom and his officers, all in full fig, walking to and fro under the awning, a most magnificent naval lounge, being thirty-two feet wide at the gangway, and extending fifty feet or more aft, until it narrowed to twenty at the tafferel. We were all—the two masters of the merchantmen, decent respectable men in their way, included—graciously received, and sat down to an excellent dinner, Mr Bang taking the lead as usual in all the fun ; and we were just on the verge of cigars and cold grog, when the first lieutenant came down and said that the captain of the port had come off, and was then on board.

“ Show him in,” said Captain Transom, and a tall, vulgar-looking blackamoor, dressed apparently in the cast-

off coat of a French grenadier officer, entered the cabin with his chapeau in his hand, and a Madras handkerchief tied round his woolly skull. He made his bow, and remained standing near the door.

“ You are the captain of the port ? ” said Captain Transom. The man answered in French, that he was. “ Why, then, take a chair, sir, if you please. ”

He begged to be excused, and after tipping off his bumper of claret, and receiving the captain’s report, he made his bow<sup>d</sup> and departed.

I returned to the Wave, and next morning I breakfasted on board of the commodore, and afterwards we all proceeded on shore to Monsieur B——’s, to whom Massa Aaron was known. The town, if I may call it so, had certainly a very desolate appearance. There was nothing stirring ; and although a group of idlers, amounting to about twenty or thirty, did collect about us on the end of the wharf, which, by the by, was terribly out of repair, yet they all appeared ill clad, and in no way so well furnished as the blackies in Jamaica ; and when we marched up through a hot, sandy, unpaved street into the town, the low, one-story, shabby-looking houses were falling into decay, and the streets more resembled river-courses than thoroughfares, while the large carrion-crows were picking garbage on the very crown of the causeway, without apparently entertaining the least fear of us, or of the negro children who were playing close to them, so near, in fact, that every now and then one of the urchins would aim a blow at one of the obscene birds, when it would give a loud discordant croak, and jump a pace or two, with outspread wings, but without taking flight. Still many of the women, who were sitting under the small piazzas, or projecting eaves of the houses, with their little stalls, filled with pullicate handkerchiefs, and

pieces of muslin, and gingham for sale, were healthy-looking, and appeared comfortable and happy. As we advanced into the town, almost every male we met was a soldier, all rigged and well dressed, too, in the French uniform; in fact, the remarkable man, King Henry, or Christophe, took care to have his troops well fed and clothed in every case. On our way we had to pass by the Commandant, Baron B——'s house, when it occurred to Captain Transom that we ought to stop and pay our respects; but Mr Bang, being bound by no such *etiquette*, bore up for his friend Monsieur B——'s. As we approached the house—a long, low, one-story building, with a narrow piazza, and a range of unglazed windows, staring open, with their wooden shutters, like ports in a ship's side, towards the street—we found a sentry at the door, who, when we announced ourselves, carried arms, all in regular style. Presently a very good-looking negro, in a handsome aid-de-camp's uniform, appeared, and, hat in hand, with all the grace in the world, ushered us into the presence of the Baron, who was lounging in a Spanish chair half asleep; but on hearing us announced, he rose, and received us with great amenity. He was a fat elderly negro, so far as I could judge, about sixty years of age, and was dressed in very wide jean trowsers, over which a pair of well-polished Hessian boots were drawn, which, by adhering close to his legs, gave him, in contrast with the wide puffing of his garments above, the appearance of being underlimbed, which he by no means was, being a stout old Turk.

After a profusion of congees and fine speeches, and superabundant assurances of the esteem in which *his* master King Henry held *our* master King George, we made our bows and repaired to Monsieur B——'s, where I was engaged to dine. As for Captain Transom, he went on board that evening to superintend the repairs of the ship.

There was no one to meet us but Monsieur B—— and his daughter, a tall and very elegant brown girl, who had been educated in France, and did the honours incomparably well. We sat down, Massa Aaron whispering in my *lug*, that in Jamaica it was not quite the thing to introduce brown ladies at dinner; but, as he said, “Why not? Neither you nor I are high caste creoles—so *en avant*.”

Dinner was nearly over, when Baron B——’s aid-de-camp slid into the room. Monsieur B—— rose. “Captain Latour, you are welcome—be seated. I hope you have not dined?”

“Why, no,” said the negro officer, as he drew a chair, while he exchanged glances with the beautiful Eugenie, and sat himself down close to *el Señor* Bang.

“Hillo, Quashie! Whereaway, my lad? a little above the salt, an’t you?” ejaculated our *amigo*; while Pegtop, who had just come on shore, and was standing behind his master, stared and gaped in the greatest wonderment. But Mr Bang’s natural good-breeding, and knowledge of the world, instantly recalled him to time and circumstances; and when the young officer looked at him, regarding him with some surprise, he bowed, and invited him, in the best French he could muster, to drink wine. The aid-de-camp was, as I have said, jet-black as the ace of spades; but he was, notwithstanding, so far as figure went, a very handsome man—tall and well made, especially about the shoulders, which were beautifully formed, and, in the estimation of a statuary, would probably have balanced the cucumber curve of the shin; his face, however, was regular negro—flat nose, heavy lips, fine eyes, and beautiful teeth, and he wore two immense gold earrings. His woolly head was bound round with a pullicate handkerchief, which we had not noticed until he took off his laced cocked hat. His coat was the exact pattern of the

French staff uniform at the time—plain blue, without lace, except at the cape and cuffs, which were of scarlet cloth, covered with rich embroidery. He wore a very handsome straight sword, with steel scabbard, and the white trowsers, and long Hessian boots, already described as part of the costume of his general.

Mr Bang, as I have said, had rallied by this time, and, with the tact of a gentleman, appeared to have forgotten whether his new ally was black, blue, or green, while the claret, stimulating him into self-possession, was evaporating in broken French. But his man Pegtop had been pushed off his balance altogether; *his* equanimity was utterly gone. When the young officer brushed past him, at the first go off, while he was rinsing some glasses in the passage, his sword banged against Pegtop's *derrière* as he stooped down over his work. He started and looked round, and merely exclaimed—"Eigh, Massa Niger, wurra dat!" But now, when standing behind his master's chair, he saw the aide-de-camp consorting with *him*, whom he looked upon as the greatest man in existence, on terms of equality, all his faculties were paralysed.

"Pegtop," said I, "hand me some yam, if you please."

He looked at me all agape, as if he had been half strangled.

"Pegtop, you scoundrel," quoth massa Aaron, "don't you hear what Captain Cringle says, sir?"

"Oh yes, massa;" and thereupon the sable valet brought me a bottle of fish sauce, which he endeavoured to pour into my wine-glass. All this while Eugenie and the aide-de-camp were playing the agreeable—and in very good taste, too, let me tell you.

I had just drank wine with mine host, when I cast my eye along the passage that led out of the room, and there was Pegtop dancing, and jumping, and smiting his thigh,



in an ecstasy of laughter, as he doubled himself up, with the tears welling over his cheeks.

“ Oh, Lord ! Oh !—Massa Bang bow, and make face, and drink wine, and do every ting shivil, to one dam black rascall nigger !—Oh, blackee more worser dan me, Gabriel Pegtop—Oh, Lard !—ha ! ha ! ha ! ”—Thereupon he threw himself down in the piazza, amongst plates and dishes, and shouted and laughed in a perfect frenzy, until Mr Bang got up, and thrust the poor fellow out of doors, in a pelting shower, which soon so far quelled the hysterical passion, that he came in again, grave as a judge, and took his place behind his master’s chair once more, and every thing went on smoothly. The aide-de-camp, who appeared quite unconscious that he was the cause of the poor fellow’s mirth, renewed his attentions to Eugenie ; and Mr Bang, M. B——, and myself, were again engaged in conversation, and our friend Pegtop was in the act of handing a slice of melon to the black officer, when a file of soldiers, with fixed bayonets, stept into the piazza, and ordered arms, one taking up his station on each side of the door. Presently another aide-de-camp, booted and spurred, dashed after them ; and, as soon as he crossed the threshold, sung out, “ *Place, pour Monsieur le Baron.* ”

The electrical nerve was again touched—“ Oh !—oh ! —oh ! Garamighty ! here comes anoder on dem,” roared Pegtop, sticking the slice of melon, which was intended for *Mademoiselle Eugenie*, into his own mouth, to quell the paroxysm, if possible, (while he fractured the plate on the black aide’s skull,) and immediately blew it out again, with an explosion, and a scattering of the fragments, as if it had been the blasting of a stone quarry.

“ Zounds, this is too much,”—exclaimed Bang, as he rose and kicked the poor fellow out again, with such

vehemence, that his skull, encountering the paunch of our friend the baron, who was entering from the street at that instant, capsized him outright, and away rolled his Excellency the Général de Division, Commandant de l'Arrondissement, &c. &c., digging his spurs into poor Pegtop's transom, and *sacring* furiously, while the black servant roared as if he had been harpooned by the very devil. The aides started to their feet—and one of them looked at Mr Bang, and touched the hilt of his sword, grinding the word "*satisfaction*" between his teeth, while the other ordered the sentries to run the poor fellow, whose mirth had been so uproarious, through. However, he got off with one or two *progues* in a very safe place; and when Monsieur B—— explained how matters stood, and that the "*pauvre diable*," as the black baron coolly called him, was a mere servant, and an uncultivated creature, and that no insult was meant, we had all a hearty laugh, and every thing rolled right again. At length the baron and his black tail rose to wish us a good evening, and we were thinking of finishing off with a cigar and a glass of cold grog, when Monsieur B——'s daughter returned into the piazza, very pale, and evidently much frightened. "*Mon père*," said she—while her voice quavered from excessive agitation—"My father—why do the soldiers remain?"

We all peered into the dark passage, and there, true enough, were the black sentries at their posts beside the doorway, still and motionless as statues. Monsieur B——, poor fellow, fell back in his chair at the sight, as if he had been shot through the heart.

"My fate is sealed—I am lost—oh, Eugenie!" were the only words he could utter.

"No, no," exclaimed the weeping girl, "God forbid—the baron is a kindhearted man—King Henry cannot

—no, no—he knows you are not disaffected, he will not injure you.”

Here one of the black aides-de-camp suddenly returned. It was the poor fellow who had been making love to Eugenie during the entertainment. He looked absolutely blue with dismay ; his voice shook, and his knees knocked together as he approached our host.

He tried to speak, but could not. “ Oh, Pierre, Pierre,” moaned, or rather gasped Eugenie, “ what have you come to communicate ? what dreadful news are you the bearer of ? ” He held out an open letter to poor B——, who, unable to read it from excessive agitation, handed it to me. It ran thus :—

“ MONSIEUR LE BARON,

“ Monsieur —— has been arrested here this morning ; he is a white Frenchman, and there are strong suspicions against him. Place his partner M. B—— under the surveillance of the police instantly. You are made answerable for his safe custody.

“ Witness his Majesty’s hand and seal, at Sans Souci, this . . .

“ The COUNT ——.”

“ Then I am doomed,” groaned poor M. B——. His daughter fainted, the black officer wept, and having laid his senseless mistress on a sofa, he approached and wrung B——’s hand. “ Alas, my dear sir—how my heart bleeds ! But cheer up—King Henry is just—all may be right—all may still be right ; and so far as my duty to him will allow, you may count on nothing being done here that is not absolutely necessary for holding ourselves blameless with the Government.”

Enough and to spare of this. We slept on shore that

night, and a very neat catastrophe was likely to have ensued thereupon. Intending to go on board ship at day-break, I had got up and dressed myself, and opened the door into the street to let myself out, when I stumbled unwittingly against the black sentry, who must have been half asleep, for he immediately stepped several paces back, and presenting his musket, the clear barrel glancing in the moonlight, snapped it at me. Fortunately it missed fire, which gave me time to explain that it was not M. B—— attempting to escape ; but that day week he was marched to the prison of La Force, near Cape Henry, where his partner had been previously lodged ; and *from that hour to this, neither of them were ever heard of*. Next evening I again went ashore, but I was denied admittance to him ; and, as my orders were imperative not to interfere in any way, I had to return on board with a heavy heart.

The day following, Captain Transom and myself paid a formal visit to the black baron, in order to leave no stone unturned to obtain poor B——'s release if we could. Mr Bang accompanied us. We found the sable dignitary lounging in a grass hammock, (slung from corner to corner of a very comfortless room, for the floor was tiled, the windows were unglazed, and there was no furniture whatever but an old-fashioned mahogany sideboard and three wicker chairs,) apparently half-asleep, or *ruminating* after his breakfast. On our being announced by a half-naked negro servant, who aroused him, he got up and received us very kindly—I beg his lordship's pardon, I should write graciously—and made us take wine and biscuit, and talked and rattled ; but I saw he carefully avoided the subject which he evidently knew was the object of our visit. At length, finding it would be impossible for him to parry it much longer single-

handed, with tact worthy of a man of fashion, he called out "Marie ! Marie !" Our eyes followed his, and we saw a young and very handsome brown *lady* rise, whom we had perceived seated at her work when we first entered, in a small dark back porch, and advance after curtsying to us *seriatim*, with great elegance, as the old fat *niger* introduced her to us as "Madame la Baronne."

"His *wife* ?" whispered Aaron ; " the old rank goat !"

Her brown ladyship did the honours of the wine-ewer with the perfect quietude and ease of a well-bred woman. She was a most lovely clear-skinned quadroon-girl. She could not have been twenty ; tall and beautifully shaped. Her long coal-black tresses were dressed high on her head, which was bound round with the everlasting Madras handkerchief, in which pale blue was the prevailing colour ; but it was elegantly adjusted, and did not come down far enough to shade the fine developement of her majestic forehead—Pasta's in *Semiramide* was not more commanding. Her eyebrows were delicately arched and sharply defined, and her eyes of jet were large and swimming ; her nose had not utterly abjured its African origin, neither had her lips, but, notwithstanding, her countenance shone with all the beauty of expression so conspicuous in the Egyptian sphinx—Abyssinian, but most sweet—while her teeth were as the finest ivory, and her chin and throat, and bosom, as if her bust had been an antique statue of the rarest workmanship. The only ornaments she wore were two large virgin gold earrings, massive yellow hoops without any carving, but so heavy that they seemed to weigh down the small thin transparent ears which they perforated ; and a broad black velvet band round her neck, to which was appended a large massive crucifix of the same metal. She also wore two broad bracelets of black velvet clasped with gold. Her beauti-



fully moulded form was scarcely veiled by a cambric *chemise*, with exceedingly short sleeves, over which she wore a rose-coloured silk petticoat, short enough to display a finely formed foot and ankle, with a well-selected pearl-white silk-stocking, and a neat low-cut French black kid shoe. As for gown, she had none. She wore a large sparkling diamond ring on her marriage finger, and we were all bowing before the deity, when our attention was arrested by a cloud of dust at the top of the street, and presently a solitary black dragoon sparked out from it, his accoutrements and headpiece blazing in the sun, then three more abreast, and immediately a troop of five-and-twenty cavaliers, or thereabouts, came thundering down the street. They formed opposite the Baron's house, and I will say I never saw a better appointed troop of horse anywhere. Presently an aide-de-camp scampered up; and having arrived opposite the door, dismounted, and entering, exclaimed, "*Les Comtes de Lemonade et Marmalade*."—"The who?" said Mr Bang; but presently two very handsome young men of colour, in splendid uniforms, rode up, followed by a glittering staff, of at least twenty mounted officers. They alighted, and entering, made their bow to Baron B——. The youngest, the Count Lemonade, spoke very decent English, and what between Mr Bang's and my bad, and Captain Transom's very good, French, we all made ourselves agreeable. I may state here, that *Lemonade* and *Marmalade* are two districts of the island of St Domingo, which had been pitched on by Christophe to give titles to two of his fire-new nobility. The grandees had come on a survey of the district, and although we did not fail to press the matter of poor B——'s release, yet they either had no authority to interfere in the matter, or they would not acknowledge that they had, so we reluctantly took leave, and went on shipboard.



“Tom, you villain,” said Mr Bang, as we stepped into the boat, “if my eye had caught yours when these *noble-men* made their *entrée*, I should have exploded with laughter, and most likely have had my throat cut for my pains. Pray, did his Highness of *Lemonade* carry a punch-ladle in his hand? I am sure I expected he of *Marmalade* to have carried a jelly-can? Oh, Tom, at the moment I heard them announced, my old dear mother flitted before my mind’s eye, with the bright, well-scoured, large brass pans in the background, as she superintended her handmaidens in their annual *preservations*.”

After the fruitless interview, we weighed, and sailed for Port-au-Prince, where we arrived the following evening.

I had heard much of the magnificence of the scenery in the Bight of Leogane, but the reality far surpassed what I had pictured to myself. The breeze, towards noon of the following day, had come up in a gentle air from the westward, and we were gliding along before it like a spread eagle, with all our light sails abroad to catch the sweet zephyr, which was not even strong enough to ruffle the silver surface of the landlocked sea, that glowed beneath the blazing mid-day sun, with a dolphin here and there cleaving the shining surface with an arrowy ripple, and a brown-skinned shark glaring on us, far down in the deep, clear, green profound, like a water fiend, and a slow-sailing pelican overhead, after a long sweep on poised wing, dropping into the sea like lead, and flashing up the water like the bursting of a shell, as we sailed up into a glorious amphitheatre of stupendous mountains, covered with one eternal forest, that rose gradually from the hot sandy plains that skirted the shore; while what had once been smiling fields, and rich sugar plantations, in the long misty level districts at their bases, were now covered with brush-

wood, fast rising up into one impervious thicket ; and as the Island of Gonave closed in the view behind us to seaward, the sun sank beyond it, amidst rolling masses of golden and blood-red clouds, giving token of a goodly day to-morrow, and gilding the outline of the rocky islet (as if to a certain depth it had been transparent) with a golden halo, gradually deepening into imperial purple. Beyond the shadow of the tree-covered islet, on the left hand, rose the town of Port-au-Prince, with its long streets rising like terraces on the gently swelling shore, while the mountains behind it, still gold-tipped in the declining sunbeams, seemed to impend frowningly over it, and the shipping in the roadstead at anchor off the town were just beginning to fade from our sight in the gradually increasing darkness, and a solitary light began to sparkle in a cabin window and then disappear, and to twinkle for a moment in the piazzas of the houses on shore like a will-of-the-wisp, and the chirping buzz of myriads of insects and reptiles was coming off from the island a-stern of us, borne on the wings of the light wind, which, charged with rich odours from the closing flowers, fanned us "like the sweet south, soft breathing o'er a bed of violets," when a sudden flash and a jet of white smoke puffed out from the hill-fort above the town, the report thundering amongst the everlasting hills, and gradually rumbling itself away into the distant ravines and valleys, like a lion growling itself to sleep, and the shades of night fell on the dead face of nature like a pall, and all was undistinguishable.—When I had written thus far—it was at Port-au-Prince, at Mr S——'s—Mr Bang entered—"Ah ! Tom—at the log, polishing—using the *plane*—shaping out something for Ebony—let me see."

Here our friend read the preceding paragraphs. They did not please him. "Don't like it, Tom."

“No? Pray, why, my dear sir?—I have tried to”——

“Hold your tongue, my good boy.

‘Cease, rude Boreas, blustering railer,  
List, old ladies, o’er your tea,  
At description Tom’s a tailor,  
When he is compared to me.  
Tooral looral loo.’

Attend—brevity is the soul of wit,—ahem. Listen how I shall crush all your lengthy yarn into an eggshell. ‘The Bight of Leogane is a horseshoe—Cape St Nicholas is the caulker on the northern heel—Cape Tiberoon, the ditto on the south—Port-au-Prince is the tip at the toe towards the east—Gonaives, Leogane, Petit Trouve, &c. &c. &c., are the nails, and the Island of Gonave is the frog.’ Now every human being who knows that a horse has four legs and a tail—of course this includes all the human race, excepting tailors and sailors—must understand this at once; it is palpable and plain, although no man could have put it so perspicuously, excepting my friend William Cobbett or myself. By the way, speaking of horses, that blood thing of the old baron’s nearly gave you your *quietus* t’other day, Tom. Why will you always pass the flank of a horse in place of going a-head of him, to use your own phrase? Never ride near a led horse on passing when you can help it; give him a wide berth, or clap the groom’s *corpus* between you and his heels; and never, never go near the croup of any quadruped bigger than a cat, for even a cow’s is inconvenient, when you can by any possibility help it.”

I laughed—“Well, well, my dear sir—but you under-value my equestrian capability somewhat too, for I do pretend to know that a horse has four legs and a tail.”

There was no pleasing Aaron this morning, I saw.

“Then, *Tummas*, my man, you know a deuced deal

more than I do. As for the tail *conceditur*—but devilish few horses have *four* legs nowadays, take my word for it. However, here comes Transom; I am off to have a lounge with him, and I will finish the veterinary lecture at some more convenient season. Tol lol de rol.”—*Exit* singing.

The morning after this I went ashore at daylight, and, guided by the sound of military music, proceeded to the Place Républicain, or square before President Petion's palace, where I found eight regiments of foot under arms, with their bands playing, and in the act of defiling before General Boyer, who commanded the *arrondissement*. This was the garrison of Port-au-Prince, but neither the personal appearance of the troops, nor their appointments, were at all equal to those of King Henry's well-dressed and well-drilled cohorts that we saw at Gonaives. The president's guards were certainly fine men, and a squadron of dismounted cavalry, in splendid blue uniforms, with scarlet trowsers richly laced, might have vied with the *élite* of Nap's own, barring the black faces. But the *matériel* of the other regiments was not *superfine*,\* as M. Boyer, before whom they were defiling, might have said.

I went to breakfast with Mr S——, one of the English merchants of the place, a kind and most hospitable man; and under his guidance, the captain, Mr Bang, and I, proceeded afterwards to call on Petion. Christophe, or King Henry, had some time before retired from the siege of Port-au-Prince, and we found the town in a very miserable state. Many of the houses were injured from shot; the president's palace, for instance, was perforated in several places, which had not been repaired. In the antechamber you could see the blue heavens through the shot-holes in the roof.—“Next time I come to court, Tom,” said Mr Bang, “I

\* The present excellent President of the Haytian Republic had at one time been a tailor, I believe.

will bring an umbrella." Turning out of the parade, we passed through a rickety, unpainted open gate, in a wall about six feet high; the space beyond was an open green or grass-plot, parched and burned up by the sun, with a common fowl here and there fluttering and *hotching* in the hole she had scratched in the arid soil; but there was neither sentry nor servant to be seen, nor any of the usual pomp and circumstance about a great man's dwelling. Presently we were in front of a long, low, one-story building, with a flight of steps leading up into an entrance-hall, furnished with several gaudy sofas, and half-a-dozen chairs—with a plain wooden floor, on which a slight approach to the usual West India polish had been attempted, but mightily behind the elegant domiciles of my Kingston friends in this respect. In the centre of this room stood three young officers, fair mulattoes, with their plumed cocked hats in their hands, and dressed very handsomely in French uniforms; and it always struck me as curious, that men who hated the very name of Frenchman, as the devil hates holy water, should copy all the customs and manners of the detested people so closely. I may mention here once for all, that Petion's officers, who, generally speaking, were all men of colour, and not negroes, were as much superior in education, and, I fear I must say, in intellect, as they certainly were in personal appearance, to the black officers of King Henry, as *his* soldiery were superior to those of the neighbouring black republic.

"Ah, Monsieur S——, *comment vous portez vous? Je suis bien aise de vous voir*," said one of the young officers; "how are you, how have you been?"

"*Vous devenez tout à fait rare*," quoth a second. "*Le president* will be delighted to see you. Why, he says he thought you must have been dead, and *les messieurs là*"——

“ Who ?—Introduce us.”

It was done in due form—the Honourable Captain Transom, Captain Cringle of his Britannic Majesty’s schooner Wave, and Aaron Bang, Esquire. And presently we were all as thick as pickpockets.

“ But come, the president will be delighted to see you.” We followed the officer who spoke, as he marshalled us along, and in an inner chamber, wherein there were also several large holes in the ceiling through which the sun shone, we found President Petion, the black Washington, sitting on a very old ragged sofa, amidst a confused mass of papers, dressed in a blue military undress frock, white trowsers, and the everlasting Madras handkerchief bound round his brows. He was much darker than I expected to have seen him, darker than one usually sees a mulatto, or the direct cross between the negro and the white, yet his features were in no way akin to those of an African. His nose was as high, sharp, and well defined as that of any Hindoo I ever saw in the Hoogly, and his hair was fine and silky. In fact, dark as he was, he was at least three removes from the African ; and when I mention that he had been long in Europe—he was even for a short space acting adjutant-general of the army of Italy with Napoleon—his general manner, which was extremely good, kind and affable, was not matter of so much surprise.

He rose to receive us with much grace, and entered into conversation with all the ease and polish of a gentleman—“ *Je me porte assez bien aujourd’hui* ; but I have been very unwell, M. S——, so tell me the news.” Early as it was, he immediately ordered in coffee ; it was brought by two black servants, followed by a most sylph-like girl, about twelve years of age, the president’s natural daughter ; she was fairer than her father, and



acquitted herself very gracefully. She was rigged, pin for pin, like a little woman, with a perfect turret of artificial flowers twined amongst the braids of her beautiful hair; and although her neck was rather overloaded with ornaments, and her poor little ears were stretching under the weight of the heavy gold and emerald ear-rings, while her bracelets were like manacles, yet I had never seen a more lovely little girl. She wore a frock of green Chinese crape, beneath which appeared the prettiest little feet in the world.

We were invited to attend a ball in the evening, given in honour of the president's birthday, and after a sumptuous dinner at our friend Mr S——'s, we all adjourned to the gay scene. There was a company of grenadiers of the president's guard, with their band, on duty in front of the palace, as a guard of honour; they carried arms as we passed, all in good style; and at the door we met two aides-de-camp in full dress, one of whom ushered us into an anteroom, where a crowd of brown, with a sprinkling of black ladies, and a whole host of brown and black officers, with a white foreign merchant here and there, were drinking coffee, and taking refreshments of one kind or another. The ladies were dressed in the very height of the newest Parisian fashion of the day—hats and feathers, and jewellery, real or fictitious, short sleeves, and shorter petticoats—fine silks, and broad blonde trimmings and flounces, and low-cut *corsages*—some of them even venturing on rouge, which gave them the appearance of purple dahlias; but as to manner, all lady-like and proper; while the men, most of them *militaires*, were as fine as gold and silver lace, and gay uniforms, and dress-swords could make them—and all was blaze, and sparkle, and jingle; but the black officers, in general, covered their woolly

pates with Madras handkerchiefs, as if ashamed to show them, the brown officers alone venturing to show their own hair. Presently a military band struck up with a sudden crash in the inner-room, and the large folding doors being thrown open, the ball-room lay before us, in the centre of which stood the president surrounded by his very splendid staff, with his daughter on his arm. He was dressed in a plain blue uniform, with gold epaulets, and acquitted himself extremely well, conversing freely on European politics, and giving his remarks with great shrewdness, and a very peculiar *naïveté*. As for his daughter, however much she might appear to have been overdressed in the morning, she was now simple in her attire as a little shepherdess—a plain white muslin frock, white sash, white shoes, white gloves, pearl earrings and necklace, and a simple, but most beautiful, *camilla japonica* in her hair. Dancing now commenced, and all that I shall say is, that before I had been an hour in the room, I had forgotten whether the faces around me were black, brown, or white; every thing was conducted with such decorum. However, I could see that the fine jet was not altogether the approved style of beauty, and that many a very handsome woolly-headed *belle* was destined to ornament the walls, until a few of the young white merchants made a dash amongst them, more for the fun of the thing, as it struck me, than any thing else, which piqued some of the brown officers, and for the rest of the evening *blackee* had it hollow. And there was friend Aaron waltzing with a very splendid woman, elegantly dressed, but black as a coal, with long kid gloves, between which and the sleeve of her gown, a space of two inches of the black skin, like an ebony armlet, was visible; while her white dress, and rich white satin hat, and a

lofty plume of feathers, with a pearl necklace and diamond earrings, set off her loveliness most conspicuously. At every wheel round Mr Bang slewed his head a little on one side, and peeped in at one of her bright eyes, and then tossing his cranium on t'other side, took a squint in at the other, and then cast his eyes towards the roof, and muttered with his lips as if he had been shot all of a heap by the blind boy's but-shaft ; but every now and then as we passed, the rogue would stick his tongue in his cheek, yet so slightly as to be perceptible to no one but myself. After this heat, Massa Aaron and myself were perambulating the ball-room, quite satisfied with our own prowess, and I was *churming* to myself, "*Voulez vous dansez, mademoiselle*"—" *De tout mon cœur,*" said a buxon brown dame, about eighteen stone by the coffee-mill in St James's Street. That devil Aaron gave me a look that I swore I would pay him for, the villain ; as the extensive mademoiselle, suiting the action to the word, started up, and hooked on, and as a cotillon had been called, there I was, figuring away most emphatically, to Bang and Transom's great entertainment. At length the dance was at an end, and a waltz was once more called, and having done my duty, I thought I might slip out between the acts ; so I offered to hand my solid armful to her seat—" *Certainement vous pouvez bien restez encore un moment.*" The devil confound you and Aaron Bang, thought I—but waltz I must, and away we whirled until the room spun round faster than we did, and when I was at length emancipated, my dark fair and fat one whispered, in a regular die-away, "*J'espère vous revoir bientôt.*" All this while there was a heavy firing of champagne and other corks, and the fun grew so fast and furious, that I remembered very little more of the matter, until the morning breeze whistled through

my muslin curtains, or musquitto net, about noon on the following day.

I arose, and found mine host setting out to bathe at Madame Le Clerc's bath, at Marquesan. I rode with him; and after a cool dip we breakfasted with President Petion at his country-house there, and met with great kindness. About the house itself there was nothing particularly to distinguish it from many others in the neighbourhood; but the little statues, and fragments of marble steps, and detached portions of old-fashioned wrought-iron railing, which had been grouped together, so as to form an ornamental terrace below it, facing the sea, showed that it had been a compilation from the ruins of the houses of the rich French planters, which were now blackening in the sun on the plain of Leogane. A couple of Buenos Ayrean privateers were riding at anchor in the bight just below the windows, manned, as I afterwards found, by Americans. The president, in his quiet way, after contemplating them through his glass, said, "*Ces pavillons sont bien neuf.*"

The next morning, as we were pulling in my gig, no less a man than Massa Aaron steering, to board the Arethusia, one of the merchantmen lying at anchor off the town, we were nearly run down by getting athwart the bows of an American schooner standing in for the port. As it was, her cutwater gave us so smart a crack that I thought we were done for; but our Palinurus, finding he could not clear her, with his inherent self-possession put his helm to port, and kept away on the same course as the schooner, so that we got off with the loss of our two larboard oars, which were snapped off like parsnips, and a good heavy bump that nearly drove us into staves.

"Never mind, my dear sir, never mind," said I; "but hereafter listen to the old song—

‘ Steer clear of the stem of a sailing ship.’ ”

Massa Aaron was down on me like lightning—

“ Or the stern of a kicking horse, Tom.”

While I continued—

“ ‘ Or you a wet jacket may catch, and a dip.’ ”——

He again cleverly clipped the word out of my mouth—

“ Or a kick on the croup, which is worse, Tom.”

“ Why, my dear sir, you are an *improvisatore* of the first quality.”

We rowed ashore, and nothing particular happened that day, until we sat down to dinner at Mr S——’s. We had a very agreeable party. Captain Transom and Mr Bang were, as usual, the life of the company ; and it was verging towards eight o’clock in the evening, when an English sailor, apparently belonging to the merchant service, came into the piazza, and planted himself opposite to the window where I sat.

He made various nautical salaams, until he had attracted my attention. “ Excuse me,” I said to Mr S——, “ there is some one in the piazza wanting me.” I rose.

“ Are you Captain Transom ? ” said the man.

“ No, I am not. There is the captain ; do you want him ? ”

“ If you please, sir,” said the man.

I called my superior officer into the dark narrow piazza.

“ Well, my man,” said Transom, “ what want you with me ? ”

“ I am sent, sir, to you from the captain of the Haytian ship, the E——, to request a visit from you, and to ask for a prayerbook.”

“ A what ? ” said Transom.

“ A prayerbook, sir. I suppose you know that he and the captain of that other Haytian ship, the P——, are condemned to be shot to-morrow morning.”

“ I know nothing of all this,” said Transom. “ Do you, Cringle ? ”

“ No, sir,” said I.

“ Then let us adjourn to the diningroom again ; or, stop, ask Mr S—— and Mr Bang to step here for a moment.”

They appeared ; and when Transom explained the affair, so far as consisted with his knowledge, Mr S—— told us that the two unfortunates in question were, one of them, a Guernsey man, and the other a man of colour, a native of St Vincent’s, whom the president had promoted to the command of two Haytian ships that had been employed in carrying coffee to England ; but on their last return voyage, they had introduced a quantity of base Birmingham coin into the republic ; which fact having been proved on their trial, they had been convicted of treason against the state, condemned, and were now under sentence of death ; and the government being purely military, they were to be shot to-morrow morning. A boat was immediately sent on board, the messenger returned with a prayerbook ; and we prepared to visit the miserable men.

Mr Bang insisted on joining us—ever first where misery was to be relieved—and we proceeded towards the prison. Following the sailor, who was the mate of one of the ships, presently we arrived before the door of the place where the unfortunate men were confined. We were speedily admitted ; but the building had none of the common appurtenances of a prison. There were neither long galleries, nor strong iron-bound and clamped doors, to pass through ; nor jailers with rusty keys jingling ; nor fetters clanking ; for we had not made two steps past the black grenadiers who guarded the door, when a sergeant showed us into a long ill-lighted room, about



thirty feet by twelve—in truth, it was more like a gallery than a room—with the windows into the street open, and no precautions taken, apparently at least, to prevent the escape of the condemned. In truth, if they had broken forth, I imagine the kindhearted president would not have made any very serious enquiry as to the *how*.

There was a small rickety old card-table, covered with tattered green cloth, standing in the middle of the floor, which was composed of dirty unpolished pitch pine planks, and on this table glimmered two brown wax candles, in old-fashioned brass candlesticks. Between us and the table, forming a sort of line across the floor, stood four black soldiers, with their muskets at their shoulders, while beyond them sat, in old-fashioned arm-chairs, three figures, whose appearance I never can forget.

The man fronting us rose on our entrance. He was an uncommonly handsome elderly personage; his age I should guess to have been about fifty. He was dressed in white trowsers and shirt, and wore no coat; his head was very bald, but he had large and very dark whiskers and eyebrows, above which towered a most splendid forehead, white, massive, and spreading. His eyes were deep-set and sparkling, but he was pale, very pale, and his fine features were sharp and pinched. He sat with his hands clasped together, and resting on the table, his fingers twitching to and fro convulsively, while his under jaw had dropped a little, and from the constant motion of his head, and the heaving of his chest, it was clear that he was breathing quick and painfully.

The figure on his right hand was altogether a more vulgar-looking personage. He was a man of colour, his caste being indicated by his short curly black hair, and his African descent vouched for by his obtuse features; but he was composed and steady in his bearing. He

was dressed in white trowsers and waistcoat, and a blue surtout ; and on our entrance he rose, and remained standing. But the person on the elder prisoner's left hand riveted my attention more than either of the other two. She was a respectable-looking, little, thin woman, but dressed with great neatness, in a plain black silk gown. Her sharp features were high and well formed ; her eyes and mouth were not particularly noticeable, but her hair was most beautiful—her long shining auburn hair—although she must have been forty years of age, and her skin was like the driven snow. When we entered, she was seated on the left hand of the eldest prisoner, and was lying back on her chair, with her arms crossed on her bosom, her eyes wide open, and staring upwards towards the roof, with the tears coursing each other down over her cheeks, while her lower jaw had fallen down, as if she had been dead—her breathing was scarcely perceptible—her bosom remaining still as a frozen sea, for the space of a minute, when she would draw a long breath, with a low moaning noise, to which succeeded a convulsive crowing gasp, like a child in the whooping-cough, and all would be still again.

At length Captain Transom addressed the elder prisoner. " You have sent for us, Mr \* \* \* ; what can we do for you—in accordance with our duty as English officers ? "

The poor man looked at us with a vacant stare—but his fellow-sufferer instantly spoke. " Gentlemen, this is kind—very kind. I sent my mate to borrow a prayer-book from you, for our consolation now must flow from above—man cannot comfort us."

The female, who was the elder prisoner's wife, suddenly leant forward in her chair, and peered intently into Mr Bang's face—" Prayerbook," said she—" prayerbook

—why, I have a prayerbook—I will go for my prayerbook”—and she rose quickly from her seat,

“*Restez*”—quoth the black sergeant—the word seemed to rouse her—she laid her head on her hands, on the table, and sobbed out as if her heart were bursting—“Oh God! oh God! is it come to this—is it come to this?” the frail table trembling beneath her, with her heart-crushing emotion. His wife’s misery now seemed to recall the elder prisoner to himself. He made a strong effort, and in a great degree recovered his composure.

“Captain Transom,” said he, “I believe you know our story. That we have been justly condemned I admit, but it is a fearful thing to die, captain, in a strange country, and by the hands of these barbarians, and to leave my own dear”—— Here his voice altogether failed him—presently he resumed. “The Government have sealed up my papers and packages, and I have neither Bible nor prayerbook—will you spare us the use of one, or both, for this night, sir?”

The captain said, he had brought a prayerbook, and did all he could to comfort the poor fellows. But, alas! their grief “knew not consolation’s name.”

Captain Transom read prayers, which were listened to by both of the miserable men with the greatest devotion, but all the while, the poor woman never moved a muscle, every faculty appearing to be once more frozen up by grief and misery. At length, the elder prisoner again spoke, “I know I have no claim on you, gentlemen; but I am an Englishman—at least I hope I may call myself an Englishman, and my wife there is an Englishwoman—when I am gone—oh, gentlemen, what is to become of *her*?—If I were but sure that she would be cared for and enabled to return to her friends, the bitterness of death would be past.” Here the poor woman threw her-

self round her husband's neck, and gave a shrill sharp cry, and relaxing her hold, fell down across his knees, with her head hanging back, and her face towards the roof, in a dead faint. For a minute or two, the husband's sole concern seemed to be the condition of his wife.

"I will undertake that she shall be sent safe to England, my good man," said Mr Bang.

The felon looked at him—drew one hand across his eyes, which were misty with tears, held down his head, and again looked up—at length he found his tongue. "That God who rewardeth good deeds here, that God whom I have offended, before whom I must answer for my sins by daybreak to-morrow, will *reward* you—I can only thank you." He seized Mr Bang's hand and kissed it.

With heavy hearts we left the miserable group, and I may mention here, that Mr Bang was as good as his word, and paid the poor woman's passage home, and, so far as I know, she is now restored to her family.

We slept that night at Mr S——'s, and as the morning dawned we mounted our horses, which our worthy host had kindly desired to be ready, in order to enable us to take our exercise in the cool of the morning. As we rode past the *Place d'Armes*, or open space in front of the president's palace, we heard sounds of military music, and asked the first chance passenger what was going on. "*Execution militaire*; or rather," said the man, "the two sea captains, who introduced the base money, are to be shot this morning—there against the rampart." Of the fact we were aware, but we did not dream that we had ridden so near the whereabouts.

"Ay, indeed?"—said Mr Bang. He looked towards the captain. "My dear Transom, I have no wish to witness so horrible a sight, but still—what say you—shall we pull up, or ride on?"

The truth was that Captain Transom and myself were both of us desirous of seeing the execution—from what impelling motive, let learned blockheads, who have never gloated over a hanging, determine; and quickly it was determined that we should wait and witness it.

First advanced a whole regiment of the president's guards, then a battalion of infantry of the line, close to which followed a whole bevy of priests clad in white, which contrasted conspicuously with their brown and black faces. After them marched two firing parties of twelve men each, drafted indiscriminately, as it would appear, from the whole garrison; for the grenadier cap was there intermingled with the glazed shako of the battalion company, and the light morion of the dismounted dragoon. Then came the prisoners. The elder culprit respectably clothed in a white shirt, waistcoat, and trousers, and blue coat, with an Indian silk yellow handkerchief bound round his head. His lips were compressed together with an unnatural firmness, and his features were sharpened like those of a corpse. His complexion was ashy blue. His eyes were half shut, but every now and then he opened them wide, and gave a startling rapid glance about him, and occasionally he staggered a little in his gait. As he approached the place of execution, his eyelids fell, his under-jaw dropped, his arms hung dangling by his side like empty sleeves; still he walked on, mechanically keeping time, like an automaton, to the measured tread of the soldiery. His fellow-sufferer followed him. His eye was bright, his complexion healthy, his step firm, and he immediately recognised us in the throng, made a bow to Captain Transom, and held out his hand to Mr Bang, who was nearest to him, and shook it cordially. The procession moved on. The troops formed into three sides of a square, the remaining one



being the earthen mound, that constituted the rampart of the place. A halt was called. The two firing parties advanced to the sound of muffled drums, and having arrived at the crest of the glacis, right over the counter-scarp, they halted on what, in a more regular fortification, would have been termed the covered way. The prisoners, perfectly unfettered, advanced between them, stepped down with a firm step into the ditch, led each by a grenadier. In the centre of it they turned and knelt, neither of their eyes being bound. A priest advanced, and seemed to pray with the brown man fervently; another offered spiritual consolation to the Englishman, who seemed now to have rallied his torpid faculties, but he waved him away impatiently, and taking a book from his bosom, seemed to repeat a prayer from it with great fervour. At this very instant of time, Mr Bang caught his eye. He dropped the book on the ground, placed one hand on his heart, while he pointed upwards towards heaven with the other, calling out in a loud clear voice, "Remember!" Aaron bowed. A mounted officer now rode quickly up to the brink of the ditch, and called out, "*Dépêchez.*"

The priests left the miserable men, and all was still as death for a minute. A low solitary tap of the drum—the firing parties came to the recover, and presently taking the time from the sword of the staff-officer who had spoken, came down to the present, and fired a rattling, straggling volley. The brown man sprang up into the air three or four feet, and fell dead; he had been shot through the heart; but the white man was only wounded, and had fallen, writhing, and struggling, and shrieking, to the ground. I heard him distinctly call out, as the reserve of six men stepped into the ditch, "*Dans la tête, dans la tête.*" One of the grenadiers advanced, and,



putting his musket close to his face, fired. The ball splashed into his skull, through the left eye, setting fire to his hair and clothes, and the handkerchief bound round his head, and making the brains and blood flash up all over his face, and the person of the soldier who had given him the *coup de grace*.

A strong murmuring noise, like the rushing of many waters, growled amongst the ranks and the surrounding spectators, while a short sharp exclamation of horror every now and then gushed out shrill and clear, and fearfully distinct above the appalling monotony.

The miserable man stretched out his legs and arms straight and rigidly, a strong shiver pervaded his whole frame, his jaw fell, his muscles relaxed, and he and his brother in calamity became a portion of the bloody clay on which they were stretched.

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE THIRD CRUISE OF THE WAVE.

“Roll on, thou deep and dark blue ocean—roll!  
Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain :  
Man marks the earth with ruin—his control  
Stops with the shore,—upon the watery plain  
The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth remain  
A shadow of man’s ravage, save his own,  
When for a moment, like a drop of rain  
He sinks into thy depths with bubbling groan,  
Without a grave, unknell’d, uncoffin’d, and unknown.”

*Childe Harold.*

I HAD been invited to breakfast on board the corvette, on the morning after this ; and Captain Transom, Mr Bang, and myself, were comfortably seated at our meal, on the quarterdeck, under the awning, skreened off by flags from the view of the men. The ship was riding to a small westerly breeze, that was rippling up the bight. The ports on each quarter, as well as the two in the stern, were open, through which we had an extensive view of Port-au-Prince, and the surrounding country.

“Now, Transom,” said our *amigo* Massa Aaron, “I am quite persuaded that the town astern of us there must always have been, and is now, exceedingly unhealthy. Only reflect on its situation ; it fronts the west, with the hot sickening afternoon’s sun blazing on it every evening, along the glowing mirror of the calm bight, under whose influence the fat black mud that

composes the beach must send up most pestilent effluvia; while in the forenoon it is shut out from the influence of the regular easterly sea-breeze, or trade-wind, by the high land behind. However, as I don't mean to stay here longer than I can help, it is not my affair; and as Mr S—— will be waiting for us, pray order your carriage, my dear fellow, and let us go on shore."

The carriage our friend spoke of, was the captain's gig, by this time alongside, ready manned,—each of the six seamen who composed her crew, with his oar resting between his knees, the blade pointed upwards towards the sky. We all got in—"Shove off"—dip fell the oars into the water—"Give way, men"—the good ash staves groaned, and cheeped, and the water buzzed, and away we shot towards the wharf. We landed, and having proceeded to Mr S——'s, we found horses ready for us, to take our promised ride into the beautiful plain of the *Cul de Sac*, lying to the northward and eastward of the town; the cavalcade being led by Massa Aaron and myself, while Mr S—— rode beside Captain Transom.

Aforetime, from the estates situated on this most magnificent plain, (which extends about fifteen miles into the interior, while its width varies from ten to five miles, being surrounded by hills on three sides,) there used to be produced no less than thirty thousand hogsheads of sugar. This was during the *ancien régime*; whereas now, I believe, the only articles it yields beyond plantains, yams, and pot herbs for the supply of the town, are a few gallons of syrup, and a few puncheons of *tafia*, a very inferior kind of rum. The whole extent of the sea-like plain, for there is throughout scarcely any inequality higher than my staff, was once covered with well-cultivated fields and happy homes; but now, alas! with brushwood from six to ten feet high,—in truth, by one sea of

jungle, through which you have to thread your difficult way along narrow, hot, sandy bridle-paths, (with the sand flies and musquittoes flaying you alive,) which every now and then lead you to some old ruinous court-yard, with the ground strewed with broken boilers and mill-rollers, and decaying hard-wood timbers, and crumbling bricks; while, a little farther on, you shall find the blackened roofless walls of what was most probably an unfortunate planter's once happy home, where the midnight brigand came and found peace and comfort, and all the elegancies of life, and left—blood and ashes; with the wild-flowers growing on the window sills, and the prickly pear on the tops of the walls, while marble steps, and old shutters, and window hinges, and pieces of china, are strewn all about; the only tenant now being most likely an old miserable negro who has sheltered himself in a coarsely thatched hut, in a corner of what had once been a gay and well-furnished saloon.

After having extended our ride, under a hot broiling sun, until two o'clock in the afternoon, we hove about, and returned towards the town. We had not ridden on our homeward journey above three miles, when we overtook a tall good-looking negro, dressed in white Osnaburg trousers, rolled up to his knees, and a check shirt. He wore neither shoes nor stockings, but his head was bound round with the usual handkerchief, over which he wore a large glazed cocked hat, with a most conspicuous Haytian blue-and-red cockade. He was goading on a jackass before him, loaded with a goodly burden apparently; but what it was we could not tell, as the whole was covered by a large sheepskin, with the wool outermost. I was pricking past the man, when Mr S—— sung out to me to shorten sail, and the next moment he startled me by addressing the pedestrian as Colonel Gabaroché. The

colonel returned the salute, and seemed in no way put out from being detected in this rather unmilitary predicament. He was going up to Port-au-Prince to take his turn of duty with his regiment. Presently up came another half-naked black fellow, with the same kind of glazed hat and handkerchief under it; but he was mounted, and his nag was not a bad one by any means. It was Colonel Gabaroche's Captain of Grenadiers, Papotiere by name. He was introduced to us, and we all moved jabbering along. At the time I write of, the military force of the Haytian Republic was composed of one-third of the whole male population capable of bearing arms, which third was obliged to be on permanent duty for four months every year; but the individuals of the quota were allowed to follow their callings as merchants, planters, or agriculturists, during the remaining eight months; they were, I believe, fed by Government during their four months of permanent duty. The weather, by the time we had ridden a couple of miles farther, began to lower, and presently, large heavy drops of rain fell, and preserving their globular shape, rolled like peas, or rather like bullets, amidst the small finely pulverized dust of the sandy path. "Umbrella" was the word—but this was a luxury unknown to our military friends. However, the colonel immediately unfurled a blanket from beneath the sheepskin, and sticking his head through a hole in the centre of it, there he stalked like a herald in his tabard, with the blanket hanging down before and behind him. As for the captain he dismounted, disencumbered himself of his trowsers, which he crammed under the mat that served him for a saddle, and taking off his shirt, he stowed it away in the capacious crown of his cocked hat, while he once more bestrid his *Bucephalus in puris naturalibus*, but conversing with all the ease in the world, and the

most perfect *sang froid*, while the thunder shower came down in bucketsful. In about half an hour, we arrived at the skirt of the brushwood or jungle, and found on our left hand some rice fields, which from appearance we could not have distinguished from young wheat; but on a nearer approach, we perceived that the soil, if soil it could be called on which there was no walking, was a soft mud, the only passages through the fields, and along the ridges, being by planks, on which several of the labourers were standing as we passed, one of whom turning to look at us, slipped off, and instantly sunk amidst the rotten slime up to his waist. The neighbourhood of these rice swamps is generally extremely unhealthy. At length we got on board the Firebrand, drenched to the skin, to a late dinner, after which it was determined by Captain Transom—of which intention, by the by, with all his familiarity, I had not the smallest previous notice—that I should cross the island to Jacmel, in order to communicate with the merchant-ships loading there; and by the time I returned, it was supposed the Firebrand would be ready for sea, when I was to be detached in the Wave, to whip in the craft at the different outports, after which we were all to sail in a fleet to Port Royal.

“I say, skipper,” quoth Mr Bang, “I have a great mind to ride with Tom—what say you?”

“Why, Aaron, you are using me ill; that shaver is seducing you altogether; but come, you won’t be a week away, and if you want to go, I see no objection.”

It was fixed accordingly, and on the morrow Mr Bang and I completed our arrangements, hired horses, and a guide, and all being in order, clothes packed, and every thing else made ready for the cruise, we rode out along with Mr S—— (we were to dine and sleep at his house) to view the fortifications on the hill above the town,



the site of Christophe's operations when he besieged the place ; and pretty hot work they must have had of it, for in two different places the trenches of the besiegers had been pushed on to the very crest of the glacis, and in one the counterscarp had been fairly blown into the ditch, disclosing the gallery of the mine behind, as if it had been a cavern, the crest of the glacis having remained entire. We walked into it, and Mr S—— pointed out where the president's troops, in Fort Républicain, had countermined, and absolutely entered the other chamber from beneath, after the explosion, and, sword in hand, cut off the storming party, (which had by this time descended into the ditch,) and drove them up through the breach into the fort, where they were made prisoners.

The *assault* had been given three times in one night, and he trembled for the town ; however, Petion's courage and indomitable resolution saved them all. For by making a sally from the south gate at grey dawn, even when the firing on the hill was hottest, and turning the enemy's flank, he poured into the trenches, routed the covering party, stormed the batteries, spiked the guns, and that evening's sun glanced on the bayonets of King Henry's troops as they raised the siege, and fell back in great confusion on their lines, leaving the whole of their battering train, and a great quantity of ammunition, behind them.

Next morning we were called at daylight, and having accoutred ourselves for the journey, we descended and found two stout ponies, the biggest not fourteen hands high, ready saddled, with old-fashioned demipiques, and large holsters at each of the saddlebows. A very stout mule was furnished for Monsieur Pegtop ; and our black guide, who had contracted for our transit across the island, was also in attendance, mounted on a very active,

well-actioned horse. We had coffee, and started. By the time we reached Leogane, the sun was high and fierce. Here we breakfasted in a low one-story building, our host being no smaller man than Major L—— of the Fourth Regiment of the line. We got our chocolate, and eggs, and fricasseed fowl, and roasted yam, and in fact made, even according to friend Aaron's conception of matters, an exceedingly comfortable breakfast.

Mr Bang here insisted on being paymaster, and tendered a sum that the black major thought so extravagantly great, considering the entertainment we had received, that he declined taking more than one-half. However, Mr Bang, after several unavailing attempts to press the money on the man, who, by the by, was simply a good-looking blackamoor, dressed in a check shirt, coarse but clean white duck trowsers, with the omnipresent handkerchief bound round his head, and finding that he could not persist without giving offence, was about pocketing the same, when Pegtop audibly whispered him, "Massa, you ever shee black niger refuse money before? but don't take it to heart, massa; me, Pegtop, will pocket him, if dat foolis black person won't."

"Thank you for nothing, Master Pegtop," said Aaron.

We proceeded, and rode across the beautiful plain, gradually sloping up from the mangrove-covered beach, until it swelled into the first range of hills that formed the pedestal of the high precipitous ridge that intersected the southern prong of the island, winding our way through the ruins of sugar plantations, with fragments of the machinery and implements employed in the manufacture scattered about, and half sunk into the soil of the fields, which were fast becoming impervious jungle, and interrupting our progress along the narrow bridle-paths. At length we began to ascend, and the comparative coolness

of the climate soon evinced that we were rapidly leaving the hot plains, as the air became purer, and thinner, at every turn. After a long, hot, hot ride, we reached the top of the ridge, and turning back had a most magnificent view of the whole Bight of Leogane, and of the Horseshoe, and Aaron's Frog; even the tops of the mountains above the Mole, which could not have been nearer than seventy miles, were visible, floating like islands or blue clouds in the misty distance. Aaron took off his hat, reined up, and turning the head of his Bucephalus towards the placid waters we had left, stretched forth his hand—

“ ‘Ethereal air, and ye swift-winged winds,  
Ye rivers springing from fresh founts, ye waves  
That o'er th' interminable ocean wreathe  
Your crisped smiles, thou all-producing Earth,  
And thee, bright Sun, I call, whose flaming orb  
Views the wide world beneath.—See!’—

“ Nearly got a stroke of the sun, Tom—what Whiffle would call a *cul de sac*—by taking off my chapeau in my poetical frenzy—so shove on.”

We continued our journey through most magnificent defiles, and under long avenues of the most superb trees, until, deeply embosomed in the very heart of the eternal forest, we came to a shady clump of bamboos, overhanging, with their ostrich-feather-like plumes, a round pool of water, mantled or creamed over with a bright green coating, as if it had been vegetable velvet, but nothing akin to the noisome scum that ferments on a stagnant pool in England. It was about the time we had promised ourselves dinner, and in fact our black guide and Pegtop had dismounted, to make their preparations.

“ Why, we surely cannot dine here? you don't mean to drink of that stagnant pool, my dear sir?”

“ *Siste paulisper*, my boy,” said Mr Bang, as he stooped down, and skimmed off the green covering with his hand, disclosing the water below, pure and limpid as a crystal-clear fountain. We dined on the brink, and discussed a bottle of vin-de-grave a-piece, and then had a small pull at brandy and water; but we ate very little,—although I was very hungry, but Mr Bang would not let me feed largely.

“ Now, Tom, you really do not understand things. When one rides a goodish journey on end—say seventy miles or so—on the same horse, one never feeds the trusty creature with half a bushel of oats; at least if any wooden spoon does, the chances are he knocks him up. No, no—you give him a *mouthful* of corn, but *plenty* to drink—a little meal and water here, and a bottle of porter in water there, and he brings you in handsomely. Zounds! how would you yourself, Tom, like to dine on turtle-soup and venison, in the middle of a hissing hot ride of sixty miles, thirty of them to be covered after the feed? Lord! what between the rich food and the punch, you would have fermented like a brewer’s vat before you reached the end of the journey; and if you had not a boll imperial measure of carbonate of soda with you, the chances are you would explode like a catamaran, your head flying through some old woman’s window, and capsizing her teapot on the one hand, while on the other your four quarters are scattered north, south, east, and west.—But *Gaudeamus*,—sweet is pleasure after pain, Tom, and all you sailors and tailors—I love to class you together—are tender—not *hearted*—creatures. Strange now that there should be three classes of his Majesty’s subjects, who never can be taught to ride,—to whom riding is, in fact, a physical impossibility; and these three are the aforesaid sailors and tailors, and dragoon officers.

However, hand me the brandy bottle ; and, Pegtop, spare me that black jack that you are rinsing—so.—Useful commodity, a cup of this kind ”—here our friend dashed in a large qualifier of cognac—“ it not only conceals the quality of the water, for you can sometimes perceive the animalculæ hereabouts without a microscope, but also the strength of the libation. So—a piece of biscuit now, and the smallest morsel of that cold tongue—your health, Thomas ”—a long pull—“ speedy promotion to you, Thomas.” Here our friend rested the jug on his knee. “ Were you ever at a *Gaudeamus* of Presbyterian clergymen on the Monday after the Sacrament Sunday, Tom,—that is, at the dinner at the manse ? ”

“ No, my dear sir ; you know I am an Episcopalian.”

“ And I am a Roman Catholic. What then ? I have been at a *Gaudeamus*, and why might not you have been at one too ? Oh, the fun of such a meeting ! the feast of reason, and the flow of Ferintosh, and the rich stories, ay, fatter than even I would venture on, and the cricket-like chirps of laughter of the probationer, and the loud independent guffaw of the placed minister, and the sly innuendos, when our *freens* get half *foo*. Oh, how I honour a *Gaudeamus* ! And why,” he continued, “ should the excellent men not rejoice, Tom ? Are they not the very men who should be happy ? Is a minister to be for ever boxed up in his pulpit—for ever to be wagging his pow, bald, black, or grizzled, as it may be, beneath his sounding board, like a bullfrog below a toadstool ? And like the aforesaid respectable quadruped or biped (it has always puzzled me which to call it), is he never to drink any thing stronger than water ? ‘ Hath not a minister eyes ? hath not a minister hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions ? Fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the

same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, that another man is? If you prick them, do they not bleed? If you tickle them, do they not laugh?' And shall we grudge them a *Gaudeamus* now and then? Shall *opera peracta ludemus* be in the mouths of all mankind, from the dirty little greasy-faced schoolboy, who wears a red gown and learns the Humanities and Whiggery in the Nineveh of the West, as the Bailie glories to call it, to the King upon his throne, and a dead letter, as well as a dead language, to them, and them only? Forbid it, the Honourable the Lord Provost—forbid it, the Honourable the Lord Provost and all the Bailies,—forbid it, the Honourable the Lord Provost and all the Bailies, and those who sit in Council with them! Forbid it,—the whole august aggregate of terror to evil-doers, and praise of them who do well! Forbid it, the Devil and Dr Faustus!"

By this time I had smuggled the jug out of our *amigo's* claw, and had done honour to his pledge. "Do you know, my dear Mr Bang, I have always been surprised that a man of your strong intellect, and clear views of most matters, should continue, in profession at least, a Roman Catholic?"

Aaron looked at me with a seriousness, an unaffected seriousness in his manner, that possessed me with the notion that I had taken an unwarrantable liberty. "Profession," at length said he, slowly and deliberately, apparently weighing every word carefully as it fell from him, as one is apt to do when approaching an interesting subject, on which you desire not to be misunderstood—"Profession—what right have you to assume this of me or any man, that my mode of faith is but profession?" and then the kind-hearted fellow, perceiving that his rebuke had mortified me, altering his tone, continued, but still



with a strong tinge of melancholy in his manner—  
“Alas! Tom, how often will weak man, in his great arrogance, assume the prerogative of his Maker, and attempt to judge—honestly, we will even allow, according to his conception—of the heart and secret things of another, but too often, in reality, by the evil scale of his own! Shall the potsherd say to his frail fellow, ‘Thou art weak, but I am strong?’ Shall the *moudiewort* say to his brother mole—(I say, Quashie, mind that mule of yours don’t snort in the water, will ye?)—‘Blind art thou, but lo, I see?’ Ah, Tom, I am a Roman Catholic! but is it thou who shalt venture down into the depths of my heart, and then say, whether I be so in profession only, or in stern unswerving sincerity?”

I found I had unwittingly touched a string that vibrated to his heart.

“I am a Roman Catholic, but, I humbly trust, not a bigoted one; for were it not against the canons of both our churches, I fear I should incline to the doctrine of Pope—

‘He can’t be wrong whose life is in the right.’

My fathers, Tom, were all Catholics before me; they may have been wrong; but I am only my father’s son,—not a better, and, I fear, I fear, not so wise a man.—Pray, Tom, did you ever hear of even a *good* Jew, who, being converted, did not become a *bad* Christian? Have you not all your life had a repugnance to consort with a sinner converted from the faith of his fathers, whether they were Jews or Gentiles, Hindoos or Mahomedans, dwellers in Mesopotamia, or beyond Jordan? You *have* such a repugnance, Tom, I know; and *I* have it too.”

“Well,” I proceeded, on the strength of the brandy grog, “in the case of an unenlightened, or ignorant, or half-educated man, I might indeed suspect duplicity, or

even hypocrisy, at the bottom of the abjuration of his fathers' creed; but in a gentleman of your acquirements and knowledge"——

"There again now, Cringle, you are wrong. The clodhopper *might* be conscientious in a change of creed, but as to the advantage I have over him from superior knowledge!——Knowledge, Tom! what do I know——what does the greatest and the best of us know—to venture on a saying somewhat of the tritest—but that he knows nothing? Oh, my dear boy, you and I have hitherto consorted together on the *deck* of life, so to speak, with the bright joyous sun sparkling, and the blue heavens laughing overhead, and the clear green sea dancing under foot, and the merry breeze buzzing past us right cheerily. We have seen but the fair weather side of each other, Thomas, without considering that all men have their deep feelings, that lie far, far down in the *hold* of their hearts, were they but stirred up. Ay, you smile at my figures, but I repeat it—in the deep *hold* of their hearts; and may I not follow out the image with verity and modesty, and say that those feelings, often too deep for tears, are the *ballast* that keeps the whole ship in trim, and without which we should be every hour of our existence liable to be driven out of our heavenward course, yea, to broach to, and founder, and sink for ever, under one of the many squalls in this world of storms? And here, in this most beautiful spot, with the deep, dark, crystal clear pool at our feet, fringed with that velvet grass, and the green quivering leaf above flickering between us and the bright blue cloudless sky,—and the everlasting rocks, with those diamond-like tears trickling down their rugged cheeks impending over us,—and those gigantic gnarled trees, with their tracery of black withes fantastically tangled, whose naked roots twist and twine

amongst the fissures, like serpents trying to shelter themselves from the scorching rays of the vertical sun,—and those feather-like bamboos high arching overhead, and screening us under their noble canopy,—and the cool plantains, their broad ragged leaves bending under the weight of dew-spangles, and the half-opened wild-flowers,—yea, even here, the ardent noontide sleeping on the hill, when even the quickeyed lizard lies still, and no longer rustles through the dry grass, and there is not a breath of air strong enough out of heaven to stir the gossamer that floats before us, or to wave that wild flower on its hair-like stem, or to ruffle the fairy plumage of the humming-bird, which, against the custom of its kind, is now quietly perched thereon; and while the bills of the chattering paroquets, that are peering at us from the branches above, are closed, and the woodpecker interrupts his tapping to look down upon us, and the only sound we hear is the moaning of the wood-pigeon, and the lulling buzz of myriads of happy insects booming on the ear, loud as the rushing of a distant waterfall—(Confound these musquittoes, though!) Even here, on this

‘ So sweet a spot of earth, you might, I ween,  
Have guessed some congregation of the elves,  
To sport by summer moons, had shaped it for themselves.’—

Even in such a place could I look forward without a shudder, to set up my everlasting rest, to lay my weary bones in the earth, and to mingle my clay with that whereout it was moulded. No fear of being *houcked* here, Thomas, and preserved in a glass case, like a stuffed woodcock, in Surgeons’ Hall. I am a barbarian, Tom, in these respects—I am a barbarian, and nothing of a philosopher. *Quiero Paz* is to be my epitaph. *Quiero Paz*—‘Cursed be he who stirs these bones.’

Did not even Shakspeare write it? What poetry in this spot, Thomas! Oh,

‘ There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,  
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,  
There is society, where none intrudes,  
By the deep sea, and music in its roar :  
I love not man the less, but nature more,  
From these our interviews, in which I steal  
From all I may be, or have been before,  
To mingle with the universe, and feel  
What I can ne’er express, yet cannot all conceal.’

Yes, even here where nature is all beautiful and *every thing*, and man abject and *nothing*—even here, Tom, amidst the loneliness of earth, rugged and half-mad as you must sometimes have thought me, a fellow wholly made up of quips and jests,—even *I* at this moment could, like an aboriginal Charib of the land, ‘ lift up my voice to the Great Spirit,’ and kneel, and weep, and pray.”

I was much moved.

“ You have spoken of knowledge, Tom. Knowledge—what do I know? Of myself I know as little as I do of any other grub that crawls on the surface of this world of sin and suffering; and what I do know, adds little to my self-esteem, Tom, and affords small encouragement to enquire further.—Knowledge, say you? How is that particle of sand here? I cannot tell. How grew that blade of grass? I do not know. Even when I look into that jug of brandy grog, (I’ll trouble you for it, Thomas,) all that I know is, that if I drink it, it will make me drunk, and a more desperately wicked creature, if that were possible, than I am already. And when I look forth on the higher and more noble objects of the visible creation, abroad on this beautiful earth, above on the glorious universe studded with shining orbs, without num-

ber numberless, what can I make of *them*? Nothing—absolutely nothing—yet they are all creatures like myself. But if I try—audaciously try—to strain my *finite* faculties, in the futile attempt to take in what is infinite—if I aspiringly, but hopelessly, grapple with the idea of the immensity of space, for instance, which my reason yet tells me must of necessity be boundless—do I not fall fluttering to the earth again, like an owl flying against the noontide sun? Again, when I venture to think of eternity—ay, when, reptile as I feel myself to be, I even look up towards heaven, and bend my erring thoughts towards the Most High, the Maker of all things, who was, and is, and is to come; whose flaming minister, even while I speak, is pouring down a flood of intolerable day on one half of the dry earth, and all that therein is; and when I reflect on what this tremendous, this inscrutable Being has done for me and my sinful race, so beautifully shown forth in both our creeds, *what do I know?* but that I am a poor miserable worm, crushed before the moth, whose only song should be the *miserere*, whose only prayer ‘God be merciful to me a sinner!’”——

There was a long pause, and I began to fear that my friend was shaken in his mind, for he continued to look steadfastly into the clear black water, where he had skimmed off the green velvet coating with his stick.

“Ay, and is it even so? and is it Tom Cringle who thinks and says that I am a man likely to profess to believe what he knows in his heart to be a lie? *A Roman Catholic!* Had I lived before the Roman Conquest I would have been a *Druid*, for it is not under the echoing domes of our magnificent cathedrals, with all the grandeur of our ritual, the flaming tapers, and bands of choristers, and the pealing organ, and smoking censers, and silver-toned bells, and white-robed priests, that the depths of

my heart are stirred up. It is *here*, and not in a temple made with hands, however gorgeous—*here*, in the secret places of the everlasting forest,—it is in such a place as this that I feel the immortal spark within me kindling into a flame, and wavering up heavenward. I am superstitious, Thomas, I am superstitious, when left alone in such a scene as this. I can walk through a country churchyard at midnight, and stumble amongst the rank grass that covers the graves of those I have lived with and loved, even if they be ‘green in death, and festering in their shrouds,’ with the wind moaning amongst the stunted yew-trees, and the rain splashing and scattering on the moss-covered tomb-stones, and the blinding blue lightning flashing, while the headstones glance like an array of sheeted ghosts, and the thunder is grumbling overhead, without a qualm—direness of this kind cannot once daunt me;—it is *here* and *now*, when all nature sleeps in the ardent noontide, that I become superstitious, and would not willingly be left alone. Thoughts too deep for tears!—ay, indeed, and there be such thoughts, that, long after time has allowed them to subside, and when, to the cold eye of the world, all is clear and smooth above, will, when stirred up, like the sediment of this fountain of the wood, discolour and embitter the whole stream of life once more, even after the lapse of long long years. When my heart-crushing loss was recent—when the wound was green, I could not walk abroad at this to me witching time of day, without a stock or a stone, a distant mark on the hill-side, or the outline of the grey cliff above, taking the very fashion of *her* face, or figure, on which I would gaze, and gaze, as if spell-bound, until I knew not whether to call it a grouping of the imagination, or a reality from without—of *her* with whom I fondly hoped to have travelled the weary road of life. Friends



approved—fortune smiled—one little month, and we should have been one ; but it pleased *Him*, to whom in my present frame of mind I dare not look up, to blight my beautiful flower, to canker my rose-bud, to change the fair countenance of my Elizabeth, and send her away. She drooped and died, even like that pale flower under the scorching sun ; and I was driven forth to worship Mammon, in these sweltering climes ; but the sting remains, the barbed arrow sticks fast.”

Here the cleared surface of the water, into which he was steadfastly looking, was gradually contracted into a small round spot about a foot in diameter, by the settling back of the green floating matter that he had skimmed aside. His countenance became very pale ; he appeared even more excited than he had hitherto been.

“ By heavens ! look in that water, if the green covering of it has not arranged itself round the clear spot into the shape of a medallion—into *her* features ! I had dreamed of such things before, but now it is a palpable reality—it is her face—her straight nose—her Grecian upper lip—her beautiful forehead, and her very bust !—even,

‘ As when years apace  
Had bound her lovely waist with woman’s zone.’

Oh, Elizabeth—Elizabeth !”

Here his whole frame shook with the most intense emotion, but at length, tears, unwonted tears, *did* come to his relief, and he hid his face in his hands, and wept bitterly. I was now convinced he was mad, but I durst not interrupt him. At length he slowly removed his hands, by which time, however, a beautiful small black diver, the most minute species of duck that I ever saw—it was not so big as my fist—but which is common in woodland ponds in the West Indies, had risen in the

centre of the eye of the fountain, while all was so still that it floated quietly like a leaf on the water, apparently without the least fear of us.

"The devil appeared in Paradise under the shape of a cormorant," said Mr Bang, half angrily, as he gazed sternly at the unlooked-for visitor; "what impart thou?"

*Tip*—the little fellow dived;—presently it rose again in the same place, and lifting up its little foot, scratched the side of its tiny yellow bill and little red-spotted head, shook its small wings, bright and changeable as shot silk, with a snow-white pen-feather in each, and then tipped up its little purple tail, and once more disappeared.

Aaron's features were gradually relaxing; a change was coming over the spirit of his dream. The bird appeared for the third time, looked him in the face, first turning up one little sparkling eye, and then another, with its neck changing its hues like a pigeon's. Aaron began to smile; he gently raised his stick—"Do you cock your *fud* at me, you tiny thief, you?"—and thereupon he struck at it with his stick. *Tip*—the duck dived, and did not rise again; and all that he got was a sprinkling shower in the face, from the water flashing up at his blow, and once more the green covering settled back again, and the bust of his dead love, or what he fancied to be so, disappeared. Aaron laughed outright, arose, and began to shout to the black guide, who, along with Pegtop, had taken the beasts into the wood in search of provender. "*Ayez le bonté de donnez moi mon cheval? Bringibus the horsos, Massa Bungo—venga los quadrupedos—make haste, vite, mucho, mucho.*"

Come, there *is my* Massa Aaron once more, at all events, thought I; but oh, how unlike the Aaron of five minutes ago!

"So now let us mount, my boy," said he, and we shoved along until the evening fell, and the sun bid us

good-by very abruptly. "Cheep, cheep," sung the lizards—"chirp, chirp," sung the crickets—"snore, snore," moaned the tree-toad—and it was night.

"Dame Nature shifts the scene without much warning here, Thomas," said Massa Aaron; "we must get along. *Dépêchez, mon cher—dépêchez; diggez votre* spurs into the *flankibus* of *votre cheval, mon ami*," shouted Aaron to our guide.

"*Oui, monsieur*," replied the man, "*mais*"——

I did not like this ominous "*but*," nevertheless we rode on. No more did Massa Aaron. The guide repeated his *mais* again. "*Mais, mon filo*," said Bang,—"*mais—que meanez vous* by baaing *comme un* sheep, eh? *Que vizzy vous*, eh?"

We were at this time riding in a bridle-road, to which the worst sheep-paths in Westmoreland would have been a railway, with our horses every now and then stumbling and coming down on their noses on the deep red earth, while we as often stood a chance of being pitched bodily against some tree on the pathside. But we were by this time all alive again, the dulness of repletion having evaporated; and Mr Bang, I fancied, began to peer anxiously about him, and to fidget a good deal, and to murmur and grumble something in his gizzard about "arms—no arms," as, feeling in his starboard holster, he detected a regular long cork of claret, where he had hoped to clutch a pistol, while in the larboard, by the praiseworthy forethought of our guide, a good roasted capon was ensconced. "I say, Tom—*tohoo*—mind I don't shoot you," presenting the bottle of claret. "If it had been soda water, and the wire not all the stronger, I might have had a chance in this climate—but we are somewhat caught here, my dear—we have no arms."

"Poo," said I, "never mind—no danger at hand, take my word for it"

"May be not, may be not—but, Pegtop, you scoundrel, why did you not fetch my pistols?"

"*Eigh*, you go fight, massa?"

"Fight! no, you booby; but could not your own num-skull—the fellow's a fool—so come—ride on, ride on."

Presently we came to an open space, free of trees, where the moon shone brightly; it was a round precipitous hollow, that had been excavated apparently by the action of a small clear stream or spout of water, that sparkled in the moonbeams like a web of silver tissue, as it leaped in a crystal arch over our heads from the top of a rock about twenty feet high, that rose on our right hand, the summit clearly and sharply defined against the blue firmament, while, on the left, there was a small hollow or ravine, down which the rivulet gurgled and vanished; while a-head the same impervious forest prevailed, beneath which we had been travelling for so many hours.

The road led right through this rugged hollow, crossing it about the middle, or, if any thing, nearer the base of the cliff; and the whole clear space between the rock and the branches of the opposite trees might have measured twenty yards. In front of us, the path took a turn to the left, as if again entering below the dark shadow of the wood; but towards the right, with the moon shining brightly on it, there was a most beautiful bank, clear of underwood, and covered with the finest short velvet grass that could be dreamed of as a fitting sward to be pressed by fairy feet. We all halted in the centre of the open space.

"See how the moonlight sleeps on yonder bank!" said I.

"I don't know what sleeps there, Tom," said Aaron; "but does that figure sleep, think you?" pointing to the dark crest of the precipitous eminence on the right hand,

from which the moonlight rill was gushing, as if it had been smitten by the rod of the Prophet.

I started, and looked—a dark half-naked figure, with an enormous cap of the shaggy skin of some wild creature, was kneeling on one knee, on the very pinnacle, with a carabine resting across his thigh. I noticed our guide tremble from head to foot, but he did not speak.

“*Vous avez des arms?*” said Bang, as he continued with great fluency, but little grammar; “*ayez le bonté de cockez votre pistolettes?*”

The man gave no answer. We heard the click of the carabine lock.

“Zounds!” said Aaron, with his usual energy when excited, “if you won’t use them, give them to me;” and forthwith he snatched both pistols from our guide’s holsters. “Now, Tom, get on. Shove t’other blackie a-head of you, Pegtop, will you? Confound you for forgetting my Mantons, you villain. I will bring up the rear.”

“Well, I will get on,” said I; “but here, give me a pistol.”

“*Ridez vous en avant, blackimoribus ambos—en avant*, you black rascals—*laissez le Capitan* and me *pour fightez*”—shouted Bang, as the black guide, guessing his meaning, spurred his horse against the moonlight bank.

“*Ah—ah!*” exclaimed the man, as he wheeled about after he had ridden a pace or two under the shadow of the trees—“*Voila ces autres brigands là.*”

“Where?” said I.

“There,” said the man in an ecstasy of fear—“there”—and peering up into the forest, where the checkering dancing moonlight was flickering on the dun, herbless soil, as the gentle night-breeze made the leaves of the trees twinkle to and fro, I saw three dark figures advancing upon us.

“ Here’s a catastrophe, Tom, my boy,” quoth Aaron, who, now that he had satisfied himself that the pistols were properly loaded and primed, had resumed all his wonted coolness in danger. “ Ask that fellow who is enacting the statue on the top of the rock what he wants. I am a tolerable shot, you know ; and if he means evil, I shall nick him before he can carry his carabine to his shoulder, take my word for it.”

“ Who is there, and what do you want ?” No answer, the man above us continued as still as if he had actually been a statue of bronze. Presently one of the three men in the wood sounded a short snorting note on a bullock’s horn.

It would seem that until this moment their comrade above us had not been aware of their vicinity, for he immediately called out in the *patois* of St Domingo, “ Advance, and seize the travellers ;” and thereupon was in the act of raising his piece to his shoulder, when—crack—Bang fired his pistol. The man uttered a loud *hah*, but did not fall.

“ Missed him, by all that is wonderful !” said my companion. “ Now, Tom, it is your turn.”

I levelled, and was in the very act of pulling the trigger, when the dark figure fell over slowly and stiffly on his back, and then began to struggle violently, and to cough loudly, as if he were suffocating. At length he rolled over and down the face of the rock, where he was caught by a strong clump of brushwood, and there he hung, while the coughing and crowing increased, and I felt a warm shower, as of heated water, sputter over my face. It was hot hot and salt—God of my fathers ! *it was blood*. But there was no time for consideration ; the three figures by this had been reinforced by six more, and they now, with a most fiendish yell, jumped down into the hollow basin, and surrounded us.



“ Lay down your arms,” one of them shouted.

“ No,” I exclaimed ; “ we are British officers, and armed, and determined to sell our lives dearly ; and if you do succeed in murdering us, you may rest assured you shall be hunted down by bloodhounds.”

I thought the game was up, and little dreamed that the name of Briton would, amongst the fastnesses of Haiti, have proved a talisman ; but it did so. “ We have no wish to injure you, but you must follow us, and see our general,” said the man who appeared to take the lead amongst them. Here two of the men scrambled up the face of the rock, and brought their wounded comrade down from where he hung, and laid him on the bank ; he had been shot through the lungs, and could not speak. After a minute’s conversation, they lifted him on their shoulders ; and as our guide and Monsieur Pegtop had been instantly bound, we were only two to nine armed men, and accordingly had nothing for it but to follow the bearers of the wounded man, with our horses tumbling and scrambling up the river-course, into which, by their order, we had now turned.

We proceeded in this way for about half a mile, when it was evident that the jaded beasts could not travel farther amongst the twisted trunks of trees and fragments of rock with which the river-course was now strewn. We therefore dismounted, and were compelled to leave them in charge of two of the brigands, and immediately began to scramble up the hill-side, through a narrow foot-path, in one of the otherwise most impervious thickets that I had ever seen. Presently a black savage, half-naked like his companions, hailed, and told us to stand. Some password that we could not understand was given by our captors, and we proceeded, still ascending, until, turning sharp off to the left, we came

suddenly round a pinnacle of rock, and looked down into a deep dell, with a winding path leading to the brink of it. It was a round cockpit of a place, surrounded with precipitous limestone-rocks on all sides, from the fissures of which large trees and bushes sprung, while the bottom was a level piece of ground, covered with long hay-like grass, evidently much trodden down. Close to the high bank, right opposite, and about thirty yards from us, a wood-fire was sparkling cheerily against the grey rock; while, on the side next us, the roofs of several huts were visible, but there was no one moving about that we could see. The moment, however, that the man with the horn sounded a rough and most unmelodious blast, there was a buzz and a stir below, and many a short grunt arose out of the pit, and long yawns, and *eigh, eighs!* while a dozen splinters of resinous wood were instantly lit, and held aloft, by whose light I saw fifty or sixty half-naked, but well-armed blacks, gazing up at us from beneath, their white eyes and whiter teeth glancing. Most of them had muskets and long knives, and several wore the military *shako*, while others had their heads bound round with the never-failing handkerchief. At length a fierce-looking fellow, dressed in short drawers, a round blue jacket, a pair of epaulets, and a most enormous cocked hat, placed a sort of rough ladder, a plank with notches cut in it with a hatchet, against the bank next us, and in a loud voice desired us to descend. I did so with fear and trembling, but Mr Bang never lost his presence of mind for a moment; and, in answer to the black chief's questions, I again rested our plea on our being British officers, despatched on service from a squadron (and as I used the word, the poor little Wave and solitary corvette rose up before me) across the island to Jacmel, to communicate with another British force lying there. The

man heard me with great patience ; but when I looked round the circle of tatterdemalions, for there was ne'er a shirt in the whole company—Falstaff's men were a joke to them—with their bright arms sparkling to the red glare of the torches, that flared like tongues of flame overhead, while they grinned with their ivory teeth, and glared fiercely with their white eyeballs on us—I felt that our lives were not worth an hour's purchase.

At length the leader spoke—"I am General Sanchez, driven to dispute President Petion's sway by his injustice to me—but I trust our quarrel is not hopeless ; will you, gentlemen, on your return to Port-au-Prince, use your influence with him to withdraw his decree against me?"

This was so much out of the way—the idea of our being deputed to mediate between such great personages as President Petion and one of his rebel generals, was altogether so absurd, that, under other circumstances, I would have laughed in the black fellow's face. However, a jest here might have cost us our lives ; so we looked serious, and promised.

"Upon your honours"—said the poor fellow.

"Upon our words of honour"—we rejoined.

"Then embrace me"—and the savage thereupon, stinking of tobacco and cocoa-nut oil, hugged me, and kissed me on both cheeks, and then did the agreeable in a similar way to Mr Bang. Here the coughing and moaning of the wounded man broke in upon the conference.

"What is that?"—said Sanchez. One of his people told him. "Ah!" said he, with a good deal of savageness in his tone—"Aha! blood?"

We promptly explained how it happened ;—for a few moments, I did not know how he might take it.

"But I forgive you," at length, said he—"however,

my men may revenge their comrade. You must drink and eat with them."

This was said aside to us, as it were. He ordered some roasted plantains to be brought, and mixed some cruel bad tafia with water in an enormous gourd. He ate, and then took a pull himself—we followed,—and he then walked round the circle, and carefully observed that every one had tasted also. Being satisfied on this head, he abruptly ordered us to ascend the ladder, and to pass on our way.

The poor fellow was mad, I believe. However, some time afterwards, the president hunted him down, and got hold of him, but I believe he never punished him. As for the wounded man—

" Whether he did live or die,  
Tom Cringle does not know."

We were reconducted by our former escort to where we left our horses, remounted, and without farther let or hinderance arrived by day-dawn at the straggling town of Jacmel. The situation is very beautiful, the town being built on the hillside, looking out seaward on a very safe roadstead, the anchorage being defended to the southward by bright blue shoals, and white breakers, that curl and roar over the coral reefs and ledges. As we rode up to Mr S——'s, the principal merchant in the place, and a Frenchman, we were again struck with the dilapidated condition of the houses, and the generally ruinous state of the town. The brown and black population appeared to be lounging about in the most absolute idleness; and here, as at Port-au-Prince, every second man you met was a soldier. The women sitting in their little shops, nicely set out with a variety of gay printed goods, and the crews of the English vessels loading coffee, were the only individuals who seemed to be capable of any exertion.

“I say, Tom,” quoth Massa Aaron,—“do you see that old fellow there?”

“What! that old grey-headed negro sitting in the harbour there?”

“Yes—the patriarch is sitting under the shadow of his own *Lima bean*.”

And so in very truth he was. The stem was three inches in diameter, and the branches had been trained along and over a sparred arch, and were loaded with pods.

“I shall believe in the story of Jack and the Beanstalk, henceforth and for ever,” said I.

We were most kindly entertained by Mr S——, and spent two or three days very happily. The evening of the day on which we arrived, we had strolled out about nine o'clock to take the air—our host and his clerks being busy in the counting-house—and were on our way home, when we looked in on them at their desks, before ascending to the apartments above. There were five clerks and Mr S——, all working away on the top of their tall mahogany tripods, by the light of their brown home-made wax candles, while three masters of merchantmen were sitting in a corner, comparing bills of lading, making up manifests, and I do not know what beside.

“It is now about time to close,” said Mr S——; “have you any objection to a little music, gentlemen? or are you too much fatigued?”

“Music—music,” said Mr Bang; “I delight in good music, but”—— He was cut short by the whole bunch, the clerks and their master, closing their ledgers, and journals, and day-books, and cash-books with a bang, while one hooked up a fiddle, another a clarionet, another a flute, &c., while Mr S—— offered, with a smile, his own clarionet to Massa Aaron, and holding out at the

same time, with the true good-breeding of a Frenchman, a span-new reed. To my unutterable surprise he took it—sucked in his lips—wet the reed in his mouth; then passing his hand across his muzzle, coolly asked Mr S—— what the piece was to be? “*Adeste fideles*, if you please,” said S——, rather taken aback. Mr Bang nodded—sounded a bar or two—gave another very scientific flourish, and then calmly awaited the opening. He then tendered a fiddle to me—altogether beyond my compass—but I offered to officiate on the kettledrum, the drummer being competent to something else. At a signal from our host away they all launched in full *crash*, and very melodious it was too, let me tell you, Aaron’s instrument telling most famously.

The next day we went to visit a tafia property in the neighbourhood. On our way we passed a dozen miserable-looking blacks, cleaning canes, followed by an ugly Turk of a brown man, almost naked, with the omnipresent glazed cocked-hat, and a drawn cutlass in his hand. He was abusing the poor devils most lustily as we rode along, and stood so pertinaciously in the path, that I could not for the life of me pass without jostling him. “*Je vous demande pardon*,” said I, with a most abject salaam to my saddle-bow. He knit his brows and shut his teeth hard, as he ground out between the glancing ivory, “*Sacre!—voilà ces foutres blancs là*,”—clutching the hilt of his couteau firmly all the while. I thought he would have struck me. But Mr S—— coming up, mollified the savage, and we rode on.

The tafia estate was a sore affair. It had once been a prosperous sugar plantation, as the broken panes and ruined houses, blackened by fire, were melancholy vouchers for; but now the whole cultivation was reduced to about a couple of acres of wiry sugar canes, and the boil-



ing and distilling was carried on in a small unroofed nook of the original works.

Two days after this we returned to Port-au-Prince, and I could not help admiring the justness of Aaron's former description; for noisome exhalations were rising thick, as the evening sun shone hot and sickly on the long bank of fat black mud that covers the beach beneath the town. We found Captain Transom at Mr S——'s. I made my report of the state of the merchantmen loading on the south side of the island, and retired to rest, deucedly tired and stiff with my ride. Next morning Bang entered my room.

"Hillo, Tom—the skipper has been shouting for you this half hour—get up, man—get up."

"My dear sir, I am awfully tired."

"Oh!" sung Bang—

" "I have a silent sorrow here'—  
eh?"

It was true enough; no sailor rides seventy miles on end with impunity. That same evening we bid adieu to our excellent host Mr S——, and the rising moon shone on us under weigh for Kingston, where two days after we safely anchored with the homeward bound trade.

"The roaring seas

Is not a place of ease,"

says a *Point* ditty. No more is the command of a small schooner in the West Indies. We had scarcely anchored when the boarding-officer from the flag-ship brought me a message to repair thither immediately. I did so. As I stepped on deck, the lieutenant was leaning on the drumhead of the capstan, with the signal-book open before him, while the signal-man was telling off the semaphore, which was rattling away at the Admiral's pen, situated about five miles off.

“ Ah ! Cringle,” said he, without turning his head, “ how are you ?—glad to see you—wish you joy, my lad. Here, lend me a hand, will you ? it concerns you.” I took the book, and as the man reported, I pieced the following comfortable sentence together.

“ Desire—Wave—fit—wood—water—instantly—to take convoy—to Spanish Main—to-morrow morning—Mr Cringle—remain on board—orders will be sent—evening.”

“ Heigh ho, says *Rowley*,”

sang I Thomas, in great wrath and bitterness of spirit, “ D——d hard—am I a duck, to live in the water altogether, entirely ?”

“ Tom, my boy,” sung out a voice from the water. It was Aaron Bang’s, who, along with Transom, had seen me go on board the receiving ship. “ Come along, man—come along—Transom is going to make interest to get you a furlough on shore ; so come along, and dine with us in Kingston.”

“ I am ordered to sea to-morrow morning, my dear sir,” said I, like to cry.—“ No !”—“ Too true, too true.” So no help for it, I took a sad farewell of my friends, received my orders, laid in my provisions and water, hauled out into the fairway, and sailed for Santa Martha next morning at daybreak, with three merchant schooners under convoy—one for Santa Martha—another for Carthagena—and the third for Porto-Bello.

We sailed on the 24th of such a month, and, after a pleasant passage, anchored at Santa Martha, at 8 A.M., on the 31st. When we came to anchor we saluted, which seemed to have been a somewhat unexpected honour, as the return was fired from the fort after a most primitive fashion. A black fellow appeared with a shovel

of live embers, one of which another *sans culotte* caught up in his hand, chucking it from palm to palm until he ran to the breach of the first gun, where clapping it on the touch-hole, he fired it off, and so on *seriatim*, through the whole battery, until the required number of guns were given, several of which, by the by, were shotted, as we could hear the balls whiz overhead. The town lies on a small plain, at the foot of very high mountains, or rather on a sand-bank, formed from the washings from these mountains. The summit of the highest of them, we could see from the deck, was covered with snow, which at sunrise, in the clear light of the cool grey dawn, shone, when struck by the first rays of the sun, like one entire amethyst. Oh, how often I longed for the wings of the eagle, to waft me from the hot deck of the little vessel, where the thermometer in the shade stood at 95, far up amongst the shining glaciers, to be comforted with cold!

One striking natural phenomenon is exhibited here, arising out of the vicinity of this stupendous prong of the Cordilleras. The sea-breeze blows into the harbour all day, but in the night, or rather towards morning, the cold air from the high regions rushes down, and blows with such violence off the land, that my convoy and myself were nearly blown out to sea the first night after we arrived; and it was only by following the practice of the native craft, and anchoring close under the lee of the beach,—in fact, by having an anchor high and dry on the shore itself—the *playa*, as the Spaniards call it—that we could count on riding through the night with security or comfort.

There are several small islands at the entrance of the harbour, on the highest of which is a fort, that might easily be rendered impregnable; it commands both the

town and harbour. The place itself deserves little notice; the houses are mean, and interspersed with negro huts, but there is one fine church, with several tolerable paintings in it. One struck me as especially grotesque, although I had often seen queer things in Roman Catholic churches in Europe. It was a representation of Hell, with Old Nicholas, under the guise of a dragon, entertaining himself with the soul of an unfortunate heretic in his claws, who certainly appeared far from comfortable; while a lot of his angels were washing the sins off a set of fine young men, as you would the dirt off *scabbitt* potatoes, in a sea of liquid fire. But their saints!—I often rejoiced that Aaron Bang was not with me; we should unquestionably have quarrelled; for as to the manner in which they were dressed and decorated, the most fantastic *mode* a girl ever *did* up her doll in, was a joke to it. Still these wooden deities are treated with such veneration, that I do believe their ornaments, which are of massive gold and silver, are never, or very rarely, stolen.

On the evening of the 2d of the following month, we sailed again, but having been baffled by calms and light winds, it was the 4th before we anchored off the St Domingo gate at Carthagena, and next morning we dropped down to Boca Chica, and saw our charge, a fine dashing schooner of 150 tons, safe into the harbour. About 9 A.M., we weighed, but we had scarcely got the anchor catted, when it came on to blow great guns from the northwest—a most unusual thing hereabouts—so it was down anchor again; and as I had made up my mind not to attempt it again before morning, I got the gig in the water with all convenient speed; and that same forenoon I reached the town, and immediately called on the Viceroy, but under very different circum-

stances from the time Mr Splinter and I had entered it along with the conquering army.

We dined with the magnate, and found a very large party assembled. Amongst others, I especially recollect that the *Inquisidor-General* was conspicuous; but every one, with the exception of the Captain-General and his immediate staff, was arrayed in gingham jackets; so there was not much style in the affair.

I had before dinner an opportunity to inspect the works of Carthagena at my leisure. It is unquestionably a very strong place, the walls, which are built of solid masonry, being armed with at least three hundred pieces of brass cannon, while the continual ebb and flow of the tide in the ditch creates a current so strong, that it would be next to impossible to fill it up, as fascines would be carried away by the current—so that, were the walls even breached, it would be impracticable to storm them. The appearance of Carthagena from the sea, that is, from a vessel anchored off the St Domingo gate, is singularly beautiful and picturesque. It is situated on a sandy island, or rather a group of islands; and the beach here shoals so gradually, that boats of even a very small draught of water cannot approach within musket-shot. The walls and numerous batteries have a very commanding appearance. The spires and towers on the churches are numerous, and many of them were decorated with flags when we were there; and the green trees shooting up amidst the red-tiled houses, afforded a beautiful relief to the prospect. A little behind the town, on a gentle acclivity, is the citadel, or Fort San Felipe, whose appearance conveys an idea of impregnable strength, (but all this sort of thing, is it not written in Roderick Random?) and on the shiplike hill beyond it, the only other eminence in the neighbourhood, stands

the convent of the Popa, like a poop lantern on the high stern of a ship, from which indeed it takes its name. This convent had been strongly fortified ; and, commanding San Felipe, was of great use to Morillo, who carried it by assault during the siege, and held it until the insurgents shelled him out from the citadel. The effect, when I first saw it, was increased by the whole scene—city, and batteries, and Popa—being reflected in the calm smooth sea, as distinctly as if it had been glass ; so clear, in fact, was the reflection, that you could scarcely distinguish the shadow from the reality. We weighed next morning—that is on the sixth of the month, and arrived safe at Porto-Bello on the 11th, after a tedious passage, during which we had continual rains, accompanied with vivid lightning and tremendous thunder. I had expected to have fallen in with one of our frigates here ; but I afterwards learned that, although I had slid down cheerily along shore, the weather current that prevailed farther out at sea had swept her away to the eastward ; so I ran in and anchored, and immediately waited on the Governor, who received me in what might once have been a barn, although it did not now deserve the name.

Porto-Bello was originally called Nombre de Dios, having received the former name from the English when we took it. It is a miserable, dirty, damp hole, surrounded by high forest-clad hills, round which everlasting mists curl and obscure the sun, whose rays, at any chance moment when they do reach the steamy swamp on which it is built, or the waters of the lead-coloured, land-locked cove that constitutes the harbour, immediately exhale a thick sickly moisture, in clouds of sluggish white vapours, smelling diabolically of decayed vegetables, and slime, and mud. I will venture a remark



that will be found, I am persuaded, pretty near the truth, that there were twenty carrion crows to be seen in the streets for every inhabitant—the people seem every way unworthy of such an abode, saffron, dingy, miserable, emaciated-looking devils. As for the place itself, it appeared to my eyes one large hospital, inhabited by patients in the yellow fever. During the whole of the following day, there was still no appearance of the frigate, and I had in consequence now to execute the ulterior part of my orders, which were, that if I did not find her at anchor when I arrived, or if she did not make her appearance within forty-eight hours thereafter, I was myself to leave the Wave in Porto-Bello, and to proceed overland across the Isthmus to Panama, and to deliver, on board of H. M. S. Bandera, into the captain's own hands, a large packet with despatches from the Government at home, as I understood, of great importance, touching the conduct of our squadron, with reference to the vagaries of some of the mushroom American Republics on the Pacific. But if I fell in with the frigate, then I was to deliver the said packet to the captain, and return immediately in the Wave to Port Royal.

Having, therefore, obtained letters from the Governor of Porto-Bello to the Commandant at Chagres, I chartered a canoe with four stout canoemen and a steersman, or *patron*, as he is called, to convey me to Cruzes; and having laid in a good stock of eatables and drinkables, and selected the black pilot, Peter Mangrove, to go as my servant, accompanied by his never-failing companion, Sneezer, and taking my hammock and double-barrelled gun, and a brace of pistols with me, we shoved off at six A.M. on the morning of the 14th.

It was a rum sort of conveyance this said canoe of mine. In the first place, it was near forty feet long, and

only five wide at the broadest, being hollowed out of one single wild cotton-tree ; how this was to be pulled through the sea on the coast, by four men, I could not divine. However, I was assured by the old thief who chartered it to me, that it would be all right ; whereas, had my innocence not been imposed on, I might, in a *caiuco*, or smaller canoe, have made the passage in one half the time it took me.

About ten feet of the afterpart was thatched with palm leaves, over a framework of broad ash hoops ; which awning, called the *toldo*, was open both towards the steersman that guided us with a long broad-bladed paddle in the stern, and in the direction of the men forward, who, on starting, stripped themselves stark naked, and, giving a loud yell every now and then, began to pull their oars, or long paddles, after a most extraordinary fashion. First, when they lay back to the strain, they jumped backwards and upwards on to the thwart with their feet, and then, as they once more feathered their paddles again, they came crack down on their bottoms with a loud *skelp* on the seats, upon which they again mounted at the next stroke, and so on.

When we cleared the harbour it was fine and serene, but about noon it came on to blow violently from the north-east. All this while we were coasting it along about pistol-shot from the white coral beach, with the clear light green swell on our right hand, and beyond it the dark and stormy waters of the blue rolling ocean ; and the snow-white roaring surf on our left. By the time I speak of, the swell had been lashed up into breaking waves, and after shipping more salt water than I had bargained for, we were obliged, about four P.M., to shove into a cove within the reef, called Naranja.

Along this part of the coast there is a chain of salt-

water lagoons, divided from the sea by the coral beach, the crest of which is covered here and there with clumps of stunted mangroves.

This beach, strangely enough, is higher than the land immediately behind it, as if it had been a dike, or natural breakwater, thrown up by the sea. Every here and there, there were gaps in this natural dike, and it was through one of these we shoved, and soon swung to our grapnel in perfect security, but in a most outlandish situation certainly.

As we rode to the easterly breeze, there was the beach as described, almost level with the water, on our left hand, the land or lee side of it covered with most beautiful white sand and shells, with whole warrens of land-crabs running out and in their holes like little rabbits, their tiny green bodies seeming to roll up and down, for I was not near enough to see their feet, or the mode of their locomotion, like bushels of grapeshot trundling all about on the shining white shore. Beyond, the roaring surf was flashing up over the clumps of green bushes, and thundering on the seaward face. On the right hand, a-head of us, and a-stern of us, the prospect was shut in by impervious thickets of mangroves, while in the distance the blue hills rose glimmering and indistinct, as seen through the steamy atmosphere. We were anchored in a stripe of clear water, about three hundred yards long by fifty broad. There was a clear space a-beam of us landward, of about half an acre in extent, on which was built a solitary Indian hut close to the water's edge, with a small canoe drawn up close to the door. We had not been long at anchor when the canoe was launched, and a monkey-looking naked old man paddled off, and brought us a most beautiful chicken turtle, some yams, and a few oranges. I asked him his price. He rejoined,

“*por amor de Dios*”—that it was his saint’s day, and he meant it as a gift. However, he did not refuse a dollar when tendered to him before he paddled away.

That night, when we were all at supper, master and men, I heard and felt a sharp crack against the side of the canoe. “Hillo, Peter, what is that?” said I.

“Nothing, sir,” quoth Peter, who was enjoying his scraps abaft, with the headman, *patron*, or whatever you may call him, of my crew. There was a blazing fire kindled on a bed of white sand, forward in the bow of the canoe, round which the four *bogas*, or canoemen, were seated, with three sticks stuck up triangularly over the fire, from which depended an earthen pot, in which they were cooking their suppers.

I had rigged my hammock between the foremost and aftermost hoops of the *toldo*, and as I was fatigued and sleepy, and it was now getting late, I desired to betake myself to rest; so I was just flirting with a piece of ham, preparatory to the cold grog, when I again felt a similar thump and rattle against the side of the canoe. There was a small aperture in the palm thatch, right opposite to where I was sitting, on the outside of which I now heard a rustling noise, and presently a long snout was thrust through, and into the canoe, which kept opening and shutting with a sharp rattling noise. It was more like two long splinters of mud-covered and half-decayed timber, than any thing I can compare it to; but as the lower jaw was opened, like a pair of Brobdingnag scissors, a formidable row of teeth was unmasked, the snout from the tip to the eyes being nearly three feet long. The scene at this moment was exceedingly good, as seen by the light of a small, bright, silver lamp, fed with spirits of wine, that I always travelled with, which hung from one of the hoops of the *toldo*. First, there was our friend

Peter Mangrove, cowering in a corner under the afterpart of the awning, covered up with a blanket, and shaking, as if with an ague-fit, with the *patron* peering over his shoulder, no less alarmed. Sneezzer, the dog, was sitting on end, with his black nose resting on the table, waiting patiently for his crumbs; and the black boatmen were forward in the bow of the canoe, jabbering, and laughing, and munching, as they clustered round a sparkling fire. When I first saw the apparition of the diabolical-looking snout, I was in a manner fascinated, and could neither speak nor move. Mangrove and the *patron* were also paralysed with fear, and the others did not see it; so Sneezzer was the only creature amongst us, aware of the danger, who seemed to have his wits about him, for the instant he noticed it, he calmly lifted his nose off the table, and gave a short startled bark, and then crouched and drew himself back as if in act to spring, glancing his eyes from the monstrous jaws to my face, and nuzzling and whining with a laughing expression, and giving a small yelp now and then, and again riveting his eyes with intense earnestness on the alligator, telling me as plainly as if he had spoken it—"If you choose, master, I will attack *it*, as in duty bound, but really such a customer is not at all in my way." And not only did he say this, but he showed his intellect was clear, and no way warped through fear, for he now stood on his hind legs, and holding on the hammock with his fore paws, he thrust his snout below the pillow, and pulled out one of my pistols, which always garnished the head of my bed, on such expeditions as the present.

My presence of mind returned at witnessing the courage and sagacity of my noble dog. I seized the loaded pistol, and as by this time the eyes of the alligator were inside of the *toldo*, I clapped the muzzle to the larboard one, and fired. The creature jerked back so suddenly and

convulsively, that part of the *toldo* was torn away : and as the dead monster fell off, the canoe rolled as if in a seaway. My crew shouted “ *Que es esto ?* ” Peter Mangrove cheered—Sneezer barked and yelled at a glorious rate, and could scarcely be held in the canoe—and looking overboard, we saw the monster, twelve feet long at least, upturn his white belly to the rising moon, struggle for a moment with his short paws, and after a solitary heavy lash of his scaly tale, he floated away a-stern of us, dead and still. To proceed—poor Peter Mangrove, whose nerves were consumedly shaken by this interlude, was seized during the night with a roasting fever, brought on in a great measure, I believe, by fear, at finding himself so far out of his latitude ; and that he had grievous doubts as to the issue of our voyage, and as to where we were bound for, was abundantly evident. I dosed him most copiously with salt water, a very cooling medicine, and no lack of it at hand.

We weighed at grey dawn, on the morning of the 15th, and at 11 o'clock, A.M., arrived at Chagres, a more miserable place, were that credible, even than Porto-Bello. The eastern side of the harbour is formed by a small promontory that runs out into the sea about five hundred yards, with a bright little bay to windward ; while a long muddy mangrove-covered spit forms the right hand bank as you enter the mouth or estuary of the river Chagres on the west. The easternmost bluff is a narrow saddle, with a fort erected on the extreme point facing the sea, which, so far as situation is concerned, is, or ought to be, impregnable, the rock being precipitous on three faces, while it is cut off to landward by a deep dry ditch, about thirty feet wide, across which a movable drawbridge is let down, and this compartment of the defences is all very regular, with scarp and counterscarp, covered-way, and glacis. The



brass guns mounted on the castle were numerous and beautiful, but every thing was in miserable disrepair; several of the guns, for instance, had settled down bodily on the platform, having fallen through the crushed rotten carriages. I found an efficient garrison in this stronghold of three old negroes, who had not even a musket of any kind, but the commandant was not in the castle when I paid my visit; however, one of the invincibles undertook to pilot me to El Señor Torre's house, where his honour was dining. The best house in the place this was, by the by, although only a thatched hut; and here I found his Excellency the Commandant, a little shrivelled insignificant-looking creature. He was about sitting down to his dinner, of which he invited me to partake, alongside of El Señor Torre, who was neither more nor less than a reputable negro; and as I was very hungry, I contrived to do justice to the first dish, but my stomach was grievously offended at the second, which seemed to me to be a compound of garlic, brick dust, and train oil, so that I was glad to hurry on board of my canoe, to settle all with a little good Madeira.

At four P.M. I proceeded up the river, which is here about a hundred yards across, and very deep; it rolls sluggishly along through a low swampy country, covered to the water's edge with thick sedges and underwood, below which the water stagnates, and generates myriads of musquittoes, and other troublesome insects, and sends up whole clouds of noxious vapours, redolent of yellow fever, and ague, and cramps, and all manner of comfortable things.

At ten P.M. we anchored by a grapnel in the stream, and I set Peter Mangrove forthwith to officiate in his new capacity of cook, and really he made a deuced good one. I then slung my hammock under the toldo, and lighting a slow match, at the end of it forwards, to smoke

away the musquittoes, having previously covered the aftermost end with a mat, I wrapped myself in my cloak, and turned in to take my snooze. We weighed again about two in the morning. As the day dawned the dull grey steamy clouds settled down on us once more, while the rain fell in a regular waterspout. It was any thing but a cheering prospect to look along the dreary vistas of the dull brimful Lethe-like stream, with nothing to be seen but the heavy lowering sky above, the red swollen water beneath, and the gigantic trees high towering overhead, and growing close to the water's edge, laced together with black snake-like withes, while the jungle was thick and impervious, and actually grew down into the water, for beach, or shore, or cleared bank, there was none,—all water and underwood, except where a soft slimy steaming black bank of mud hove its shining back from out the dead waters near the shore, with one or more monstrous alligators sleeping on it, like dirty rotten logs of wood, scarcely deigning to lift their abominable long snouts to look at us as we passed, or to raise their scaly tails, with the black mud sticking to the scales in great lumps—oh—horrible—most horrible ! But the creatures, although no beauties certainly, are harmless after all. For instance, I never heard a well-authenticated case of their attacking a human being hereabouts ; pigs and fowls they do tithe, however, like any parson. I don't mean to say that they would not make free with a little fat dumpling of a *piccaniny*, if he were thrown to them, but they seem to have no ferocious propensities. I shot one of them ; he was about twelve feet long ; the bullet entered in the joints of the mail, below the shoulder of the fore-paw, where the hide was tender ; but if you fire at them *with* the scale, that is, with the monster looking at you, a musket-ball will

glance. I have often in this my Log spoken of the Brobdingnag lizards, the guanas. I brought down one this day, about three feet long, and found it, notwithstanding its dragon-like appearance, very good eating. At eleven A.M., on the 18th, we arrived at the village of Cruzes, the point where the river ceases to be navigable for canoes, and from whence you take horse, or rather mule, for Panama. For about fifteen or twenty miles below Cruzes, the river becomes rapid, and full of shoals, when the oars are laid aside, and the canoes are propelled by long poles.

The Town, as it is called, is a poor miserable place, composed chiefly of negro huts; however, a Spanish trader of the name of Villaverde, who had come over in the Wave as a passenger, and had preceded me in a lighter canoe, and to whom I had shown some kindness, now repaid it, as far as lay in his power.

He lodged me for the night, and hired mules for me to proceed to Panama in the morning; so I slung my hammock in an old Spanish soldier's house, who keeps a kind of *posada*, and was called by my friend Villaverde at daydawn, whose object was, not to tell me to get ready for my journey, but to ask me if I would go and bathe before starting. Rather a rum sort of request, it struck me; nevertheless, a purification, after the many disagreeables I had endured, could not come amiss; and slipping on my trowsers, and casting my cloak on my shoulders, away we trudged to a very beautiful spot, about a mile above Cruzes, where, to my surprise, I found a score of *Crusaños*, all *ploutering* in the water, puffing and blowing and shouting. Now an alligator might pick and choose, thought I; however, no one seemed in the least afraid, so I dashed amongst them. Presently, about pistol-shot from us, a group of females

appeared. Come, thought I, rather too much for a modest young man this too ; and deuce take me, as I am a gentleman, if the whole bevy did not disrobe in cold blood, and squatter, naked as their mother Eve was in the garden of Eden, before she took to the herbage, right into the middle of the stream, skirling and laughing, as if not even a male musquitto had been within twenty miles. However, my neighbour took no notice of them ; it seemed all a matter of course. But let that pass. About eight o'clock A.M. I got under weigh, with Peter Mangrove, on two good stout mules, and a black guide running before me with a long stick, with which he sprung over the sloughs and stones in the road with great agility ; I would have backed him against many a passable hunter, to do four miles over a close country in a steeple-chase.

Panama is distant from Cruzes about seven leagues. The road is somewhat like what the Highland ones must have been before General Wade took them in hand, and only passable for mules ; indeed, in many places where it has been hewn out of the rock in zigzags on the face of the hill, it is scarcely passable for two persons meeting. But the scenery on each side is very beautiful, as it winds, for the most part, amongst steep rocks, overshadowed by magnificent trees, amongst which birds of all sizes, and of the most beautiful plumage, are perpetually glancing, while a monkey, every here and there, would sit grimacing, and chattering, and scratching himself in the cleft of a tree.

I should think, judging from my barometer—but I may have made an inaccurate calculation, and I have not Humboldt by me—that the ridge of the highest is fifteen hundred feet above the level of the ocean, so that it would be next to impossible to join the two seas at this point

by a canal *with water in it*. However, I expect to see a Joint Stock Company set agoing some fine day yet, for the purpose of cutting it, that is, when the national capital next accumulates (and Lord knows when that will be) to a plethora, and people's purses become so distended that they require bleeding.

After travelling about twenty miles, the scene gradually opens, and one begins to dream about Vasco Nuñez and the enthusiastic first explorers of the Isthmus ; but my first view of the Pacific was through a drenching shower of rain, that wet me to the skin, and rather kept my imagination under, for this said imagination of mine is like a barn-door chuckey, brisk and *crouse* enough when the sun shines, and the sky is blue, and plenty of grub at hand, but I can't write poetry when I am *cauld*, and hungry, and *drooked*. Still, when I caught my first glimpse of the distant Pacific, I felt that, even through a miserable drizzle, it was a noble prospect.

As you proceed, you occasionally pass through small open savannahs, which become larger, and the clear spaces wider, until the forest you have been travelling under gradually breaks into beautiful clumps of trees, like those in a gentleman's park, and every here and there a placid clear piece of water spreads out, full of pond turtle, which I believe to be one and the same with the tortoise, and eels ; the latter of which, by the by, are very sociable creatures, for in the clear moonlight nights, with the bright sparkling dew on the short moist grass, they frequently travel from one pond to another, wriggling along the grass likes nakes. I have myself found them fifty yards from the water ; but whether the errand was love or war, or merely to drink tea with some of the slippery young females in the next pool, and then return again, the deponent sayeth not.

As you approach the town, the open spaces before-mentioned become more frequent, until at length you gain a rising ground, about three miles from Panama, where, as the sun again shone out, the view became truly enchanting.

There lay the town of Panama, built on a small tongue of land, jutting into the Pacific, surrounded by walls, which might have been a formidable defence once, but I wish my promotion depended on my rattling the old bricks and stones about their ears, with one single frigate, if I could only get near enough ; but in the impossibility of this lies the strength of the place, as the water shoals so gradually, that the tide retires nearly a mile and a half from the walls, rising, I consider, near eighteen feet at the springs, while, on the opposite side of the Isthmus, at Chagres for instance, there is scarcely any at all, the gulf stream neutralizing it almost entirely.

On the right hand a hill overhangs the town, rising precipitously to the height of a thousand feet or thereabouts, on the extreme pinnacle of which is erected a signal station, called the *Vigia*, which, at the instant I saw it, was telegraphing to some craft out at sea. As for the city, to assume our friend Mr Bang's mode of description, it was shaped like a tadpole, the body representing the city, and the suburb the tail ; or a stewpan, the city and its fortifications being the pan, while the handle, tending obliquely towards us, was the *Raval*, or long street, extending Savannahward, without the walls. At the distance from which we viewed it, the red-tiled houses, cathedral, with its towers, and the numerous monasteries and nunneries, seemed girt in with a white ribbon, while a series of black spots here and there denoted the cannon on the batteries. To the left of the town, there was a whole flotilla of small craft, brigs, schooners, and vegetable boats ; while farther out at sea, beyond the



fortifications, three large ships rode at anchor; and beyond them again, the beautiful group of islands lying about five miles off the town, appeared to float on and were reflected in the calm, glasslike expanse of the Pacific, like emeralds chased in silver, while the ocean itself, towards the horizon, seemed to rise up like a scene in a theatre, or a burnished bright silver wall, growing more and more blue, and hazy and indistinct, as it ascended, until it melted into the cloudless heaven, so that no one could tell where water and sky met.

“Thou glorious mirror,  
 - - - - - in all time,  
 Calm or convulsed—in breeze, or gale, or storm,  
 Icing the pole, or in the torrid clime  
 Dark heaving—boundless, endless, and sublime,  
 The image of Eternity—the throne  
 Of the Invisible.”——

While a sperm whale every now and then rose between us and the islands, and spouted up a high double jet into the air, like a blast of steam, and then, with a heavy flounder of his broad tail, slowly sank again; and a boat here and there glided athwart the scene, and a sleepy sail arose with a slow motion and a fitful rattle, and a greasy cheep, on the mast of some vessel, getting all ready to weigh, while small floating trails of blue smoke were streaming away a-stern from the tiny cabooses of the craft at anchor, and a mournful distant “yo heave oh” came booming past us on the light air, and the everlasting tinkle of the convent bells sounded cheerily, and the lowing of the kine around us called up old associations in my bosom, as I looked forth on the glorious spectacle from beneath a magnificent bower of orange-trees and shaddock, while all manner of wild-flowers blossomed and bloomed around us.

We arrived at Panama about three P. M., covered to the eyes with mud, and after some little difficulty, I found out Señor Hombrecillo Justo's house, who received me very kindly. Next morning I waited on the Governor, made my bow and told him my errand. He was abundantly civil; professing himself ready to serve me in any way, and promising to give me the earliest intelligence of the arrival of the *Bandera*. I then returned to mine host's, to whom I had strong letters of introduction from some Kingston friends.

I soon found that I had landed amongst a family of originals. Mine host was a little thin withered body, with a face that might have vied with the monkey whom the council of Aberdeen took for a sugar planter. He wore his own grey hair in a long greasy queue, and his costume, when I first saw him, was white cotton stockings, white jean small-clothes and waistcoat, and a little light-blue silk coat; he wore large solid gold buckles in his shoes, and knee-buckles of the same. His voice was small and squeaking, and when heated in argument, or crossed by any member of his family,—and he was very touchy,—it became so shrill and indistinct that it pierced the ear without being in the least intelligible. In those paroxysms he did not walk, but sprung from place to place like a grasshopper, with unlooked-for agility, avoiding the chairs and tables and other movables with great dexterity. I often thought he would have broken whatever came in his way; but although his erratic orbit was small, he performed his evolutions with great precision and security. His general temper, however, was very kind, humane, and good-humoured, and he seldom remained long under the influence of passion. His character, both as a man and a merchant, was unimpeachable, and, indeed, proverbial in the place. His better half appeared

to be some years older, and also a good deal of an original. She was a little short thick woman ; but, stout as she was when I had the honour of an embrace, she must have been once much stouter, for her skin appeared, from the colour and texture, to have come to her at second-hand, and to have originally belonged to a much larger person, for it bagged and hung in flaps about her jowls and bosom, like an ill-cut maintopsail, which sits clumsily about the clews. I think I could have reefed her with advantage, below the chin.

Her usual dress was a shift, with a whole sailroom of frills about the sleeves and bosom, and a heavy pink taffeta petticoat, (gowns being only worn by these fair ones as you put on a greatcoat, that is, when they go abroad,) and a small round apron like a flap of black silk. Over these she wore a Spanish aroba, or 25 lbs. weight of gold chains, saints, and crucifixes, and a large black velvet patch, of the size of a wafer, on each temple, which I found, by the by, to be an ornament very much in fashion amongst the fair of Panama. Her hair, or rather the scanty remnant thereof, was plaited into two grizzled braids, with a black bow of ribbon at the end of each, and hung straight down her back. Like many excellent wives, she loved to circulate her spouse's blood by a little well-timed opposition now and then ; but she never tried her strength too far, and she always softened down in proportion as he waxed energetic and began to accelerate his motions, so that by the time he had given one or two hops, she had either fairly given *in*, or moved *out*. They had no children, but had in a manner adopted a little black creature about four years old, which, being a female, the lady had christened by the familiar diminutive of *Diablita*.

Another curiosity was the maternal aunt of Don Hom-

brecillo, a little superannuated woman about four feet high, if she could have stood erect, but old age had long since bent her nearly double; she was on the verge of eighty-five years of age, and had outlived all her faculties. This poor old creature, in place of being respectably lodged and taken care of, was allowed to go about the house, tame, without any fixed abode so far as I could learn; nor did she always meet with that attention, I am sorry to say it, from the family, or even from the servants, that she was entitled to from her extreme helplessness. She had a droll custom of eating all her meals walking, and it was her practice to move round the dinner-table in this her dotage, and to commit pranks, that, against my will, made me laugh, and even in despite of the feelings of pity and self-humiliation that arose in my bosom at the sight of such miserable imbecility in a fellow-creature. Thus keeping on the wing as I have described, it was her practice to cruise about behind the chairs, occasionally snatching pieces of food from before the guests, so slyly, that the first intimation of her intentions was the appearance of her yellow shrivelled birdlike claw in your plate.

The brother of our host was a little stout man, but still very like Señor Justo himself. For instance, I always gloried in likening the latter to a dried prune; then, to conceive of his plump brother, imagine him boiled, and so swell out the creases in his skin, and there you have him.

This little dumpling was very asthmatic, and used to blow like a porpoise by the time he reached the top of the stairs. The only time he had ever been out of Panama was whilst he made a short visit to Lima, the wonders of which he used to chant unceasingly. But the continual cause of my annoyance—I fear I must write disgust—was the stepmother of mine host, a large

fat dirty old woman. She had a pouch under her chin like a pelican, while her complexion, from the quantity of oil and foul feeding in which she delighted, was a greasy mahogany. She despised the unnatural luxuries of knives and forks, constantly devouring her meat with her fingers, whatever its consistency might be; if flesh, she tore it with both hands; if soup, she—bah! and, as the devil would have it, the venerable beauty chose to take a fancy to me. Oh, she was a balloon! I have often expected to see her rise to the roof.

These polished personages may be called Señor Justo's family, but it was occasionally increased by various others; none of whom, however, can I heave-to to describe at present.

The day after my arrival, the operation of covering dollar boxes with wet hides had been going on in the dinner saloon the whole forenoon, which drove me forth to look about me; but I returned about half-past two, this being the hour of dinner, and found all the family, excepting mine hostess, assembled, and my appearance was the signal for dinner being ordered in. I may mention here, that this worthy family were all firmly impressed with the idea, that an Englishman was an ostrich, possessing a stomach capable of holding and digesting four times as much as any other person; and under this belief they were so outrageously kind, that I was often literally stuffed to suffocation when I first came amongst them; and when at length I resolutely refused to be immolated after this fashion, they swore I was sick, or did not like my food, which was next door to insulting them. El Señor Justo's fat dumpling of a brother thought medical advice ought to be taken, for when he was in Lima several seamen belonging to an English whaler had died, and he had remarked, the twaddling

body, that they had invariably lost their appetites previous to their dissolution.

But to return. Dinner being ordered, was promptly placed on the table, and mine host insisted on planting me at the foot thereof, while he sat on my left hand; so the party sat down; but the chair opposite, that ought to have been filled by *Madama* herself, was still vacant.

“*Adonde esta su ama,*” quoth Don Hombrecillo to one of the black waiting wenches. The girl said she did not know, but she would go and see. It is necessary to mention here that the worthy Señor’s counting-house was in a back building, separated from the house that fronted the street by a narrow court; and in a small closet off this counting-house, my *quatre* had been rigged the previous night, and there had my luggage been deposited. Amongst other articles in my commissariat, there was a basket with half-a-dozen of champagne, and some hock, and a bottle of brandy, that I had placed under Peter Mangrove’s care to comfort us in the wilderness. We all lay back in our chairs to wait for the lady of the house, but neither did she nor *Tomassa*, the name of the handmaiden who had been despatched in search of her, seem inclined to make their appearance. Don Hombrecillo became impatient.

“*Josefa,*”—to another of the servants—“run and *desire* your mistress to come here immediately.” Away she flew, but neither did this second pigeon return. Mine host now lost his temper entirely, and spluttered out, as loud as he could roar, “*Somos comiendo, Panchita, somos comiendo;*” and forthwith, as if in spite, he began to fork up his food, until he had nearly choked himself. Presently a short startled scream was heard from the counting-house, then a low suppressed laugh,



then a loud shout, a long uproarious peal of laughter, and the two black servants came thundering across the wooden gangway or drawbridge, that connected the room where we sat with the outhouse, driven onwards by their mistress herself. They flew across the end of the dining-room into the small balcony fronting the lane, and began without ceremony to shout across the narrow street to a Carmelite priest, who was in a gallery of the opposite monastery, "that their mistress was *possessed*."

Presently in danced our landlady, *in propria personâ*, jumping and screaming and laughing, and snapping her fingers, and spinning round like a Turkish dervish,—"*mira el fandango, mira el fandango—dexa me baylar, dexa me baylar*—See my fandango, see my fandango—let me dance—let me dance—ha, ha, ha."

"Panchita," screamed Justo, in extreme wrath, "*tu es loco*, you are mad—sit down, *por amor de Dios—seas decente*—be decent."

She continued gamboling about, "*Joven soy y virgin—I am young and a virgin—y tu Viejo diablo que quieres tu*,—and you, old devil, what do you want, eh?—*Una virgin por Dios soy—I am young*," and seizing a boiled fowl from the dish, she let fly at her husband's head, but missed him, fortunately; whereupon she made a regular grab at him with her paw, but he slid under the table, in all haste, roaring out,—"*Ave Maria, que es esso—manda por el Padre*—Send for the priest, *y trae una puerca, en donde echar el demonio, manda, manda*—send for a priest, and a pig, into which the demon may be cast,—send—" "*Dexa me, dexa me baylar*"—continued the old dame—" *tu no vale, bobo viejo*,—you are of no use, you old blockhead—you are a forked radish, and not a man—let me catch you, let me catch you," and here she made a second attempt, and got hold of his *queue*, by which she

forcibly dragged him from beneath the table, until, fortunately, the ribbon that tied it slid off in her hand, and the little Señor instantly ran back to his burrow, with the speed of a rabbit, while his wife sung out, "*tu gastas calzones, eh? para que, damelos damelos, yo los quitare?*" and if she had caught the worthy man, I believe she would really have shaken him out of his garments, peeled him on the spot, and appropriated them to herself as her threat ran. "I am a cat, a dog, and the devil—hoo—hoo—hoo—let me catch you, you miserable wretch, you forked radish, and if I don't peel off your breeches,—I shall wear them, I shall wear them,—*Ave Maria.*" Here she threw herself into a chair, being completely blown; but after a gasp or two, she started to her legs again, dancing and singing and snapping her fingers, as if she had held castanets between them, "*Venga—Venga—dexa me baylar—Dankee, Dankee la—Dankee, Dankee la—mi guitarra—mi guitarra—Dankee, Dankee la—ha, ha, ha,*"—and away she trundled down stairs again, where she met the priest who had been sent for, in the lower hall, who happened to be a very handsome young man. Seeing the state she was in, and utterly unable to account for it, he bobbed, as she threw herself on him, eluded her embraces, and then bolted up stairs, followed by Mrs Potiphar, at full speed.—"*Padre, father,*" cried she, "stop till I peel that forked radish there, and I will give you his breeches—*Dankee, Dankee la.*" All this while, Don Hombrecillo was squeaking out from his lair, at the top of his pipe—"*Padre, padre, trae la puerca, venga la puerca—echar el demonio—echar el demonio—bring the pig, the pig, and cast out the devil.*"—" *Mi guitarra, canta, canta y bayle, viejo diablito, canta o yo te matarras*—Bring my guitar,

dance, dance and sing, you little old devil you, or I'll murder you,—*Dankee, Dankee la.*”

In fine, I was at length obliged to lend a hand, and she was bodily laid hold of, and put to bed, where she soon fell into a profound sleep, and next morning awoke in her sound senses, totally unconscious of all that had passed, excepting that she remembered having taken a glass of the Englishman's *small beer*.

Now the secret was out. The worthy woman, like most South American Spaniards, was distractedly fond of *cervesa blanca*, or small beer, and seeing the champagne bottles with their wired corks (beer requiring to be so secured in hot climates) in my basket, she could not resist making free with a bottle, and, as I charitably concluded, small beer being a rarity in those countries, she did not find out the difference until it was made evident by the issue ; however, I have it from authority, that she never afterwards ventured on any thing weaker than brandy, and from that hour, utterly eschewed that most dangerous liquor, *cervesa blanca*.

## CHAPTER VII.

## TROPICAL HIGH-JINKS.

“ Now, massa, pipe belay  
Wid your weary, weary Log, O ;  
Peter sick of him, me say,  
Ah ! sick more as one dog, O.”

*The humble Petition of Peter Mangrove, Branch Pilot.*

LIKE all Portuguese towns, and most Spanish, Panama does not realize the idea which a stranger forms of it from the first view, as he descends from the savannah. The houses are generally built of wood, and three stories high : in the first or ground-floor, are the shops ; in the second, the merchants have their warehouses ; and in the third, they usually live with their families. Those three different regions, sorry am I to say it, are all very dirty ; indeed they may be said to be the positive, comparative, and superlative degrees of uncleanness. There are no glazed sashes in the windows, so that when it rains, and the shutters are closed, you are involved in utter darkness. The furniture is miserably scanty—some old-fashioned, high-backed, hard-wood chairs, with a profusion of tarnished gilding ; a table or two, in the same style, with a long grass hammock slung from corner to corner, intersecting the room diagonally, which, as they hang very low, about six inches only from the floor, it was not *once* only, that entering a house during the *siesta*, when the windows were darkened, I have tumbled headlong over a

Don or Doña, taking his or her forenoon nap. But if *movables* were scarce, there was no paucity of silver dishes; basins, spitboxes, censers, and utensils of all shapes, descriptions, and sizes, of this precious metal, were scattered about without any order or regularity, while some nameless articles, also of silver, were thrust far out of their latitude, and shone conspicuously in the very centre of the rooms. The floors were usually either of hard-wood plank, ill kept; or terraced, or tiled; some indeed were flagged with marble, but this was rare; and as for the luxury of a carpet, it was utterly unknown, the nearest approach to it being a grass mat, plaited prettily enough, called an *estera*. Round the walls of the house are usually hung a lot of dingy-faced, worm-eaten pictures of saints, and several crucifixes, which appear to be held in great veneration. The streets are paved, but exceedingly indifferently; and the frequent rains, or rather waterspouts, (and from the position of the place, between the two vast oceans of the Atlantic and Pacific, they have considerably more than their own share of moisture,) washing away the soil and sand from between the stones, render the footing for *bestias* of all kinds extremely insecure. There are five monasteries of different orders, and a convent of nuns, within the walls, most of which, I believe, are but poorly endowed. All these have handsome churches attached to them; that of La Merced is very splendid. The cathedral is also a fine building, with some good pictures, and several *lay* relics of Pizarro, Almagro, and Vasco Nuñez, that riveted my attention; while their fragments of the *Vera Cruz*, and arrow points that had quivered in the muscles of St Sebastian, were passed by as weak inventions of the enemy.

The week after my arrival was a fast, the men eating only once in the twenty-four hours, (as for the women,

who the deuce can tell how often a woman eats?) and during this period all the houses were stripped of their pictures, lamps, and ornaments, to dress out the churches, which were beautifully illuminated in the evenings, while a succession of friars performed service in them continually. High mass is, even to the eye of a heretic, a very splendid ceremony; and the music in this outlandish corner was unexpectedly good, every thing considered; in the church of La Merced, especially, they had a very fine organ, and the congregation joined in the *Jubilate* with very good taste. By the way, in this same church, on the right of the high altar, there was a deep and lofty recess, covered with a thick black veil, in which stood concealed a figure of our Saviour, as large as life, hanging on a great cross, with the blood flowing from his wounds, and all kinds of horrible accompaniments. At a certain stage of the service, a drum was beaten by one of the brethren, upon which the veil was withdrawn, when the whole congregation prostrated themselves before the image, with every appearance of the greatest devotion. Even the passengers in the streets within ear-shot of the drum, stopped and uncovered themselves, and muttered a prayer; while the inmates of the houses knelt, and crossed themselves, with all the externals of deep humility; although, very probably, they were at the moment calculating in their minds the profits on the last adventure from Kingston. One custom particularly struck me as being very beautiful. As the night shuts in, after a noisy prelude on all the old pots in the different steeples throughout the city, there is a dead pause; presently the great bell of the cathedral tolls slowly, once or twice, at which every person stops from his employment, whatever *that* may be, or wherever *he* may be, uncovers himself, and says a short prayer—all hands remaining still



and silent for a minute or more, when the great bell tolls again, and once more every thing rolls on as usual.

On the fourth evening of my residence in Panama, I had retired early to rest. My trusty knave, Peter Mangrove, and trustier still, my dog Sneezer, had both fallen asleep on the floor, at the foot of my bed, if the piece of machinery on which I lay deserved that name, when in the dead of night I was awakened by a slight noise at the door. I shook myself and listened. Presently it opened, and the old woman that I have already described as part and portion of Don Hombrecillo Justo's family, entered the room in her usual very scanty dress, with a lighted candle in her hand, led by a little naked negro child. I was curious to see what she would do, but I was not certain how the dog might relish the intrusion ; so I put my hand over my *quatre*, and snapping my finger and thumb, Sneezer immediately rose and came to my bedside. I immediately judged, from the comical expression of his face, as seen by the taper of the intruder, that he thought it was some piece of fun, for he walked quietly up, and confronting the old lady, deliberately took the candlestick out of her hand. The little black urchin thereupon began shouting, "*Perro Demonio—Perro Demonio*"—and in their struggle to escape, she and the old lady tumbled headlong over the sleeping pilot, whereby the candle was extinguished, and we were left in utter darkness. I had therefore nothing for it but to get out of bed, and go down to the cobbler, who lived in the *entresol*, to get a light. He had not gone to sleep, and I gave him no small alarm ; indeed he was near absconding at my unseasonable intrusion, but at length I obtained the object of my visit, and returned to my room, when, on opening the door, I saw poor Mangrove lying on his back

in the middle of the floor, with his legs and arms extended as if he had been on the rack, his eyes set, his mouth open, and every faculty benumbed by fear. At his feet sat the negro child, almost as much terrified as he was, and crying most lamentably ; while, at a little distance, sat the spectre of the old woman, scratching its head with the greatest composure, and exclaiming in Spanish, “ a little brandy for love of the Holy Virgin.” But the most curious part of it was the conduct of our old friend Sneezer. There he was sitting on end upon the table, grinning and showing his ivory teeth, his eyes of jet sparkling like diamonds with fun and frolic, and evidently laughing after his fashion, like to split himself, as he every now and then gave a large sweeping whisk of his tail, like a cat watching a mouse. At length I got the cobbler and his sable rib to take charge of the wanderers, and once more fell asleep.

On my first arrival, I was somewhat surprised at my Spanish acquaintances always putting up their umbrellas when abroad after nightfall in the streets ; the city had its evil customs, it seemed, as well as others of more note, with this disadvantage, that no one had the discretion to sing out *gardyloo*.

There was another solemn fast about this time, in honour of a saint having had a tooth drawn, or some equally important event, and Don Hombrecillo and I had been at the evening service in the church of the convent of La Merced, situated, as I have already mentioned, directly opposite his house, on the other side of the lane ; and this being over, we were on the eve of returning home, when the flannel-robed superior came up and invited us into the refectory, whereunto, after some palaver, we agreed to adjourn, and had a *good* supper, and some *bad* Malaga wine, which, however, seemed to suit

the palates of the *Frailes*, if taking a very decent quantity thereof were any proof of the same. Presently two of the lay brothers produced their fiddles, and as I was determined not to be outdone, I volunteered a song, and, as a key-stone to my politeness, sent to Don Hombrecillo's for the residue of my brandy, which, coming after the bad wine, acted most cordially, opening the hearts of all hands like an oyster-knife, the Superior's especially, who in turn drew on his private treasure also, when out came a large green vitrified earthen pipkin, one of those round-bottomed jars that won't stand on end, but must perforce lie on their sides, as if it had been a type of the predicament in which some of us were to be placed ere long through its agency. The large cork, buried an inch deep in green wax, was withdrawn from the long neck, and out gurgled most capital old *Xeres*. So we worked away until we were all pretty well *fou*, and anon we began to dance; and there were half-a-dozen friars, and old Justo and myself, in great glee, jumping and gamboling about, and making fools of ourselves after a very fantastic fashion—the witches in Macbeth as an illustration.

At length, after being two months in Panama, and still no appearance of the *Bandera*, I received a letter from the Admiral, desiring me to rejoin the *Wave* immediately, as it was then known that the line-of-battle ship had returned to the River Plate. Like most young men, who have hearts of flesh in their bosoms, I had in this short space begun to have my likings—may I not call them friendships?—in this, at the time I write of, most primitive community; and the idea of bidding farewell to it, most likely for ever, sank deep. However, I was His Majesty's officer, and my services and obedience were his, although my feelings were my own; and, accordingly, stifling the latter, I prepared for my departure.

On the very day whereon I was recalled, a sister of mine host's—a most reverend mechanic, who had been fourteen years married without chick or child—was brought to bed, to the unutterable surprise of her spouse, and of all the little world in Panama, of a male infant. It had rained the whole day, notwithstanding which, and its being the only authenticated production ever published by the venerable young lady, the *piccaniny* was carried to the Franciscan church, a distance of half a mile at nine o'clock at night, through a perfect storm, to be christened, and the evil star of poor Mangrove rose high in the ascendant on the occasion.

After the ceremony, I was returning home chilled with standing uncovered for an hour in a cold damp church, and walking very fast, in order to bring myself into heat, when, on turning a corner, I heard a sound of flutes and fiddles in the street, and from the number of lanterns and torches that accompanied it, I conjectured rightly that it was a *Function* of no small importance—no less, in fact, than a procession in honour of the Virgin. Poor Mangrove at this time was pattering close to my heels, and I could hear him chuckling and laughing to himself.

“What dis can be—I say, Sneezer”—to his never-failing companion—“what you tink? *John Canoe*, after Spanish fashion, it mosh be, eh?”

The dog began to jump and gambol about.

“Ah,” continued the black pilot, “no doubt it must be *John Canoe*—I may dance—why not—eh?—oh, yes—I shall dance.”

And as the music struck into rather a quicker tune at the moment, our ebony friend began to caper and jump about as if he had been in Jamaica at Christmas time, whereupon one of the choristers, or music boys, as they

were called, a beautiful youth, about forty years of age, six feet high, and proportionably strong, without the least warning incontinently smote our *amigo* across the pate with a brazen saint that he carried, and felled him to the earth; indeed, if el Señor Justo had not been on the spot to interfere, we should have had a scene of it in all likelihood, as the instant the man delivered his blow, Sneezer's jaws were at his throat, and had he not fortunately obeyed me, and let go at the sound of my voice, we might have had a *double* of *Macaire* and the dog of Montargis. As it was, the noble animal, before he let go, brought the culprit to the ground like a shot. I immediately stood forward, and got the feud soldered as well as I could, in which the worthy Justo cordially lent me a hand.

Next morning I rode out on my mule, to take my last dip in the Quebrada of the Loseria, a rapid in a beautiful little rivulet, distant from Panama about three miles, and a most exquisite bath it was. Let me describe it. After riding a couple of miles, and leaving the open savannah, you struck off sharp to the left through a narrow bridle-path into the wood, with an impervious forest on either hand, and proceeding a mile farther, you came suddenly upon a small rushing, roaring, miniature cascade, where the pent-up waters leaped through a narrow gap in the limestone rock, that you could have stepped across, down a tiny fall about a fathom high, into a round foaming buzzing basin, twenty feet in diameter, where the clear cool water bubbled and eddied round and round like a boiling cauldron, until it rushed away once more over the lower ledge, and again disappeared, murmuring beneath the thick foliage of the rustling branches. The pool was about ten feet deep, and never was any thing more luxurious in a hot climate.

After having performed my morning ablutions, and looking with a heavy heart at the sweet stream, and at every stock and stone, and shrub and tree, as objects I was never to see again, I trotted on, followed by Peter Mangrove, my man-at-arms, who bestrode his mule gallantly, to Don Hombrecillo's pen, as the little man delighted to call his country-house, situated about five miles from Panama, and which I was previously informed had been given up to the use of his two maiden sisters. I got there about half-past ten in the forenoon, and found that el Señor Justo had arrived before me. The situation was most beautiful ; the house was embosomed in high wood ; the lowest spurs put forth by the gigantic trees being far above the ridge-pole of the wooden fabric. It was a low one-story building of unpainted timber, which, from the action of the weather, had been bleached on the outside into a whitish grey appearance, streaked by numerous green weather-stains, and raised about five feet on wooden posts, so that there was room for a flock of goats to shelter themselves below it. Access was had to the interior by a rickety rattle-trap of a wooden ladder, or stair of half-a-dozen steps, at the top of which you landed in an unceiled hall, with the rafters of the roof exposed, and the bare green vitrified tiles for a canopy, while a small sleeping apartment opened off each end. In the centre room there was no furniture except two grass hammocks slung across the room, and three or four old-fashioned leather, or rather *hide* covered chairs, and an old rickety table ; while overhead the tiles were displaced in one or two places, where the droppings from the leaves of the trees, and the *sough* of their rustling in the wind, came through. There were no inmates visible when we entered but a little negro girl, of whom el Señor Hombrecillo asked " where the Señoras



were?"—" *En capilla*," said the urchin. Whereupon we turned back and proceeded to a little tiny stone chapel, little bigger than a dog-house, the smallest affair in the shape of a church I had ever seen, about a pistol-shot distant in the wood, where we found the two old ladies and Señor Justo's natural son engaged at their devotions. On being aware of our presence, they made haste with the service, and, having finished it, arose and embraced their brother, while the son approached and kissed his hand.

One of the ancient *demoiselles* appeared in bad health; nevertheless, they both gave us a very hearty reception, and prepared breakfast for us; fricasseed fowls, a little too much of the lard, but still ———, fish from the neighbouring stream, &c., and I was doing the agreeable to the best of my poor ability, when el Señor Justo asked me abruptly if I would go and bathe. A curious country, thought I, and a strange way people have of doing things. After a hearty meal, instead of giving you time to ruminate, and to allow the gastric juices to operate, away they lug you to be plumped over head and ears into a pool of ice-cold water. I rose, confoundedly against my inclination I will confess, and we proceeded to a small rocky waterfall, where a man might *wash* himself certainly, but as to swimming, which is to me the grand *desideratum*, it was impossible, so I prowled away down the stream, to look out for a pool, and at last I was successful. On returning, as I only took a dip to swear by, the situation of my venerable Spanish ally was entertaining enough. There he was, the most forlorn little mandrake eye ever rested on, cowering like a large frog under the tiny cascade, stark naked, with his knees drawn up to his chin, and his grey queue gathered carefully under a green gourd or calabash that he wore on his head, while

his natural son was dashing water in his face, as if the shower-bath overhead had not been sufficient.

"*Soy bañando—soy bañando, capitan—fresco—fresquito,*" squealed Hombrecillo ; while, splash between every exclamation, his dutiful son let fly a gourdful of *agua* at his head.

That same evening we returned to Panama ; and next morning, being the 22d of such a month, I left my kind friends, and, with Peter Mangrove, proceeded on our journey to Cruces, mounted on two stout mules. I got there late in the evening, the road, from the heavy rains, being in sad condition ; but next morning the *recua*, or convoy of silver, which was to follow me for shipment on merchants' account to Kingston, had not arrived. Presently I received a letter from Don Justo, sent express, to intimate that the muleteers had proceeded immediately after we had started for about a mile beyond the suburbs, where they were stopped by the officer of a kind of military post or barrier, under pretence of the passport being irregular ; and this difficulty was no sooner cleared up, than the accounts of a bullfight, that was unexpectedly to take place that forenoon, reached them, when the whole bunch, half drunk as they were, started off to Panama again, leaving the money with the soldiers ; nor would they return, or be prevailed on to proceed, until the following morning. However, on the 24th, at noon, the money did arrive, which was immediately embarked on board of a large canoe that I had provided ; and, having shipped a beautiful little mule also, of which I had made a purchase at Panama, we proceeded down the river to the village of Gorgona, where we slept. My apartment was rather a primitive concern. It was simply a roof or shed, thatched with palm-tree-leaves, about twelve feet long by eight broad, and sup-

ported on four upright posts at the corners, the eaves being about six feet high. Under this I slung my grass hammock transversely from corner to corner, tricing it well up to the rafters, so that it hung about five feet from the ground; while beneath Mangrove lit a fire, for the twofold purpose, as it struck me, of driving off the musquittoes, and converting his Majesty's officer into ham or hung beef; so after having made *mulo* fast to one of the posts, with a bundle of *malojo*, or the green stems of Indian corn or maize, under his nose, he borrowed a plank from a neighbouring hut, and laid himself down on it at full length, covered up with a blanket, as if he had been a corpse, and soon fell fast asleep. As for Sneezer, he lay with his black muzzle resting on his fore paws, which were thrust out straight before him, until they almost stirred up the white embers of the fire; with his eyes shut, and apparently asleep, but from the constant nervous twitchings and pricking up of his ears, and his haunches being gathered up well under him, and a small quick switch of his tail now and then, it was evident he was broad awake, and considered himself on duty. All continued quiet and silent in our bivouac until midnight, however, except the rushing of the river hard by, when I was awakened by the shaking of the shed from the violent struggles of *mulo* to break loose, his strong tremblings thrilling along the taught cord that held him, down the lanyard of my hammock to my neck, as he drew himself in the intervals of his struggles as far back as he could, proving that the poor brute suffered under a paroxysm of fear. "What noise is that?" I roused myself. It was repeated. It was a wild cry, or rather a loud shrill *mew*, gradually sinking into a deep growl. "What the deuce is that, Sneezer?" said I. The dog made no answer, but merely wagged his tail once, as if

he had said, "Wait a bit now, master; you shall see how well I shall acquit myself, for *this is* in my way." Ten yards from the shed under which I slept, there was a pigsty, surrounded by a sort of tiny stockade a fathom high, made of split cane, wove into wickerwork between upright rails sunk into the ground; and by the clear moonlight I could, as I lay in my hammock, see an animal larger than an English bull-dog, but with the stealthy pace of the cat, crawl on in a crouching attitude until within ten feet of the sty, when it stopped, looked round, and then drew itself back, and made a scrambling jump against the cane defence, hooking on to the top of it by its fore paws, the claws of its hind feet scratching and rasping against the dry cane splits, until it had gathered its legs into a bunch, like the aforesaid puss, on the top of the enclosure; from which elevation the creature seemed to be reconnoitring the unclean beasts within. I grasped my pistols. Mangrove was still sound asleep. The struggles of *mulo* increased; I could hear the sweat raining off him; but Sneezer, to my great surprise, remained motionless as before. We now heard the alarmed grunts, and occasionally a sharp squeak, from the piggery, as if the beauties had only now become aware of the vicinity of their dangerous neighbour, who, having apparently made his selection, suddenly dropped down amongst them; when *mulo* burst from his fastenings with a yell, enough to frighten the devil, tearing away the upright to which the lanyard of my hammock was made fast, whereby I was pitched like a shot right down on Mangrove's corpus, while a volley of grunting and squeaking split the sky, such as I never heard before; in the very nick, Sneezer, starting from his lair, with a loud bark, sprang at a bound into the enclosure, which he topped like a first-rate hunter; and Peter Man-

grove, awakening all of a heap from my falling on him, jumped upon his feet as noisy as the rest.

“Garamighty in a tap—wurra all dis—my tomach bruise home to my backbone like one pancake;” and, while the short fierce bark of the noble dog was blended with the agonized cry of the *gatto del monte*, the shrill treble of the poor porkers rose high above both, and *mulo* was galloping through the village with the post after him, like a dog with a pan at his tail, making the most unearthly noises; for it was neither bray nor neigh. The villagers ran out of their huts, headed by the *padre cura*, and all was commotion and uproar. Lights were procured. The noise in the sty continued, and Mangrove, the warmhearted creature, unsheathing his knife, clambered over the fence to the rescue of his fourfooted ally, and disappeared, shouting, “Sneezer often fight for Peter, so Peter now will fight for he;” and soon began to blend his shouts with the cries of the enraged beasts within. At length the mania spread to me upon hearing the poor fellow shout, “Tiger here, captain—tiger here—tiger too many for we—Lud-a-mercy—tiger too many for we, sir,—if you no help we, we shall be torn in piece.” Then a violent struggle, and a renewal of the uproar, and of the barking, and yelling, and squeaking. It was now no joke; the life of a fellow-creature was at stake. So I scrambled up after the pilot to the top of the fence, with a loaded pistol in my hand, a young active Spaniard following with a large brown wax candle, that burned like a torch; and looking down on the *mêlée* below, there Sneezer lay with the throat of the leopard in his jaws, evidently much exhausted, but still giving the creature a cruel shake now and then, while Mangrove was endeavouring to throttle the brute with his bare hands. As for the poor pigs, they were all huddled together,



squeaking and grunting most melodiously in the corner. I held down the light. "Now, Peter, cut his throat, man—cut his throat."

Mangrove, the moment he saw where he was, drew his knife across the leopard's *weasand*, and killed him on the spot. The glorious dog, the very instant he felt he had a dead antagonist in his fangs, let go his hold, and making a jump with all his remaining strength, for he was bleeding much, and terribly torn, I caught him by the nape of the neck, and, in my attempt to lift him over and place him on the outside, down I went, dog and all, amongst the pigs, upon the bloody carcass; out of which mess I was gathered by the *cura* and the standers-by in a very beautiful condition; for, what between the filth of the sty and blood of the leopard, and so forth, I was not altogether a fit subject for a side-box at the Opera.

This same tiger or leopard had committed great depredations in the neighbourhood for months before, but he had always escaped, although he had been repeatedly wounded; so Peter and I became as great men for the two hours longer that we sojourned in Gorgona, as if we had killed the dragon of Wantley. Our quarry was indeed a noble animal, nearly seven feet from the nose to the tip of the tail. At daydawn, having purchased his skin for three dollars, I shoved off; and, on the 25th, at five in the evening, having had a strong current with us the whole way down, we arrived at Chagres once more. I found a boat from the Wave waiting for me, and to prevent unnecessary delay, I resolved to proceed with the canoe along the coast to Porto-Bello, as there was a strong weather current running, and little wind; and, accordingly, we proceeded next morning, with the canoe



in tow, but towards the afternoon it came on to blow, which forced us into a small cove, where we remained for the night in a very uncomfortable situation, as the awning proved an indifferent shelter from the rain, that descended in torrents.

We had made ourselves as snug as it was possible to be in such weather, under an awning of boat sails, and had kindled a fire in a tub at the bottom of the boat, at which we had made ready some slices of beef, and roasted some yams, and were, all hands, master and men, making ourselves comfortable with a glass of grog, when the warp by which we rode suddenly parted, from a puff of wind that eddied down on us over the little cape, and before we could get the oars out, we were tailing on the beach at the opposite side of the small bay. However, we soon regained our original position, by which time all was calm again where we lay; and this time, we sent the end of the line ashore, making it fast round a tree, and once more rode in safety. But I could not sleep, and the rain having ceased, the clouds broke away, and the moon once more shone out cold, bright, and clear. I had stepped forward from under the temporary awning, and was standing on the thwart, looking out to windward, endeavouring to judge of the weather at sea, and debating in my own mind whether it would be prudent to weigh before daylight, or remain where we were. But all in the offing, beyond the small headland, under the lee of which we lay, was dark and stormy water, and white-crested howling waves, although our snug little bay continued placid and clear, with the moonbeams dancing on the twinkling ripple, that was lap, lapping, and sparkling like silver on the snow-white beach of sand and broken shells; while the hills on shore that rose high and abrupt close-to, were covered with thick jungle, from

which, here and there, a pinnacle of naked grey rock would shoot up like a gigantic spectre, or a tall tree would cast its long black shadow over the waving sea of green leaves that undulated in the breeze beneath.

As the wind was veering about rather capriciously, I had cast my eye anxiously along the warp, to see how it bore the strain, when to my surprise it appeared to thicken at the end next the tree, and presently something like a screw, about a foot long, that occasionally shone like glass in the moonlight, began to move along the taught line, with a spiral motion. All this time one of the boys was fast asleep, resting on his folded arms on the gunwale, his head having dropt down on the stem of the boat; but one of the Spanish *bogas* in the canoe, which was anchored close to us, seeing me gazing at something, now looked in the same direction; the instant he caught the object, he thumped with his palms on the side of the canoe—exclaiming, in a loud alarmed tone—“*Culebra—culebra*,—a snake, a snake,”—on which the reptile made a sudden and rapid slide down the line towards the bow of the boat where the poor lad was sleeping, and immediately afterwards dropped into the sea.

The sailor rose and walked aft, as if nothing had happened, amongst his messmates, who had been alarmed by the cries of the Spanish canoeman, and I was thinking little of the matter, when I heard some anxious whispering amongst them.

“Fred,” said one of the men, “what is wrong, that you breathe so hard?”

“Why, boy, what ails you?” said another.

“Something has stung me,” at length said the poor little fellow, speaking thick, as if he had laboured under sore throat. The truth flashed on me, a candle was lit,

and, on looking at him, he appeared stunned, complained of cold, and suddenly assumed a wild startled look.

He evinced great anxiety and restlessness, accompanied by a sudden and severe prostration of strength—still continuing to complain of great and increasing cold and chilliness, but he did not shiver. As yet no part of his body was swollen, except very slightly about the wound ; however, there was a rapidly increasing rigidity of the muscles of the neck and throat, and within half an hour after he was bit, he was utterly unable to swallow even liquids. The small whip-snake, the most deadly asp in the whole list of noxious reptiles peculiar to South America, was not above fourteen inches long ; it had made four small punctures with its fangs, right over the left jugular vein, about an inch below the chin. There was no blood oozing from them, but a circle about the size of a crown-piece of dark red surrounded them, gradually melting into blue at the outer rim, which again became fainter and fainter, until it disappeared in the natural colour of the skin. By the advice of the Spanish boatman, we applied an embrocation of the leaves of the *palma Christi*, or castor-oil nut, as hot as the lad could bear it, but we had neither oil nor hot milk to give internally, both of which they informed us often proved specifics. Rather than lie at anchor, until morning, under these melancholy circumstances, I shoved out into the rough water, but we made little of it, and when the day broke, I saw that the poor fellow's fate was sealed. His voice had become inarticulate, the coldness had increased, all motion in the extremities had ceased, the legs and arms became quite stiff, the respiration slow and difficult, as if the blood had coagulated, and could no longer circulate through the heart ; or as if, from some unaccountable effect of the poison on the nerves, the action of it had been impeded ;—still the

poor little fellow was perfectly sensible, and his eye bright and restless. His breathing became still more interrupted—he could no longer be said to breathe, but gasped—and in another half hour, like a steam-engine when the fire is withdrawn, the strokes, or contractions and expansions of his heart became slower and slower, until they ceased altogether.

From the very moment of his death, the body began rapidly to swell, and become discoloured; the face and neck, especially, were nearly as black as ink within half an hour of it, when blood began to flow from the mouth, and other symptoms of rapid decomposition succeeded each other so fast, that by nine in the morning we had to sew him up in a boat sail, with a large stone, and launch the body into the sea.

We continued to struggle against the breeze until eleven o'clock in the forenoon of the 27th, when the wind again increased to such a pitch, that we had to cast off our tow, and leave her on the coast, under the charge of little Reefpoint, with instructions to remain in the creek where he was, until the schooner picked him up; we then pushed once more through the surf for Porto-Bello, where we arrived in safety at five P.M. Next morning at daylight we got under weigh, and stood down for the canoe, and having received the money on board, and the Spaniards who accompanied it, and poor *muló*, we made sail for Kingston, Jamaica, and on the 4th of the following month were off Carthagena once more, having been delayed by calms and light winds. The captain of the port shoved out to us, and I immediately recognised him as the officer to whom poor old Deadeye once gave a deuced fright, when we were off the town, in the old Torch, during the siege, shortly before she foundered in the hurricane; but in the present instance he was all civility;

on his departure we made sail, and arrived at Kingston, safe and sound, in the unusually short passage of sixty hours from the time we left Carthagenæ.

Here the first thing I did was to call on some of my old friends, with one of whom I found a letter lying for me from Mr Bang, requesting a visit at his domicile in St Thomas in the Vale so soon as I arrived ; and through the extreme kindness of my Kingston allies, I had, on my intention of accepting it being known, at least half a dozen gigs offered to me, with servants and horses, and I don't know what all. I made my selection, and had arranged to start at day-dawn next morning, when a cousin of mine, young Palma, came in where I was dining, and said that his mother and the family had arrived in town that very day, and were bound on a pic-nic party next morning to visit the Falls in St David's. I agreed to go, and to postpone my visit to friend Aaron for the present ; and very splendid scenery did we see ; but as I had seen the Falls of Niagara, of course I was not *astonished*. There was a favourite haunt and cave of Three-fingered Jack shown to us in the neighbourhood, very picturesque and romantic, and all that sort of thing, but I was escorting my Mary, and the fine scenery and roaring waters were at this time thrown away on me. However, there was one incident amusing enough. Mary and I had wandered away from the rest of the party, about a mile above the cascade, where the river was quiet and still, and divided into several tiny streams or pools, by huge stones that had rolled from the precipitous banks, down into its channel ; when on turning an angle of the rock, we came unexpectedly on my old ally Whiffle, with a cigar in his mouth, seated on a cane-bottomed chair, close to the brink of the water, with a little low table at his right hand, on which stood a plate of cold meat, over which

his black servant held a green branch, with which he was brushing the flies away, while a large rummer of cold brandy grog was immersed in the pool at his feet, covered up with a cool plantain leaf. He held a long fishing-rod in his hands, eighteen feet at the shortest, fit to catch salmon with, which he had to keep nearly upright, in order to let his hook drop into the pool, which was not above five feet wide—why he did not heave it by hand I am sure I cannot tell; indeed, I would as soon have thought of angling for gold fish in my aunt's glass globe—and there he sat fishing with great complacency. However, he seemed a little put out when we came up. “Ah, Tom, how do you do?—Miss, your most obsequious—no rain—mullet deucedly shy, Tom—ah! what a glorious nibble—there—there again—I have him;” and sure enough, he had hooked a fine mountain mullet, weighing about a pound and a half, and in the ecstasy of the moment, and his hurry to land him handsomely, he regularly capsized in his chair, upset the rummer of brandy grog and table and all the rest of it. We had a good laugh, and then rejoined our party, and that evening we all sojourned at Lucky Valley, a splendid coffee estate, with a most excellent man and an exceedingly obliging fellow for a landlord.

Next day we took a long ride, to visit a German gentleman, who had succeeded in a wonderful manner in taming fish. He received us very hospitably, and after lunch we all proceeded to his garden, through which ran a beautiful stream of the clearest water. It was about four feet broad, and a foot deep, where it entered the garden, but gradually widened in consequence of a dam with stakes at the top having been erected at the lower part of it, until it became a pool twelve feet broad, and four feet deep, of the most beautiful crystal-clear water that



can be imagined, while the margin on both sides was fringed with the fairest flowers that Europe or the tropics could afford. We all peered into the stream, but could see nothing except an occasional glance of a white scale or fin now and then.—“Liverpool!” shouted the old German who was doing the honours,—“Liverpool, come bring de food for de fis.” Liverpool, a respectable-looking negro, approached, and stooping down at the water’s edge, held a piece of roasted plantain close to the surface of it. In an instant, upwards of a hundred mullet, large fine fish, some of them above a foot long, rushed from out the dark clear depths of the quiet pool, and jumped, and walloped, and struggled for the food, although the whole party were standing close by. Several of the ladies afterwards tried their hand, and the fish, although not apparently quite so confident, after a tack here and a tack there, always in the end came close to and made a grab at what was held to them.

That evening I returned to Kingston, where I found an order lying for me to repair as second-lieutenant on board the *Firebrand* once more, and to resign the command of the *Wave* to no less a man than Moses Yerk, esquire; and a happy man was Moses, and a gallant fellow he proved himself in her, and earned laurels and good freights of specie, and is now comfortably domiciled amongst his friends.

The only two *Waves*, that I successfully made interest at their own request to get back with me, were Tail-tackle, and little Reefpoint.

Time wore on—days and weeks and months passed away, during which we were almost constantly at sea, but incidents worth relating had grown scarce, as we were now in piping times of peace, when even a stray pirate had become a rarity, and a luxury denied to all but the

small craft people. On one of our cruises, however, we had been working up all morning to the southward of the Pedro shoals, with the wind strong at east, a hard fiery sea-breeze. We had hove-about, some three hours before, and were standing in towards the land, on the starboard tack, when the look-out at the masthead hailed.

“The water shoals on the weather bow, sir;” and presently, “breakers right a-head.”

“Very well,” I replied—“all right.”

“We are nearing the reefs, sir,” said I, walking aft and addressing Captain Transom; “shall we stand by to go about, sir?”

“Certainly—heave in stays as soon as you like, Mr Cringle.”

At this moment the man aloft again sung out—“There is a wreck on the weathermost point of the long reef, sir.”

“Ay! what does she look like?”

“I see the stumps of two lower masts, but the bowsprit is gone, sir—I think she must be a schooner or a brig, sir.”

The captain was standing by, and looked up to me, as I stood on the long eighteen at the weather-gangway.

“Is the breeze not too strong, Mr Cringle?”

I glanced my eye over the side—“Why, no, sir—a boat will live well enough—there is not so much sea in shore here.”

“Very well—haul the courses up, and heave to.”

It was done.

“Pipe away the yawlers, boatswain’s mate.”

The boat over the lee-quarter was lowered, and I was sent to reconnoitre the object that had attracted our attention. As we approached, we passed the floating swollen carcasses of several bullocks, and some pieces of

wreck ; and getting into smooth water, under the lee of the reef, we pulled up under the stern of the shattered hull which lay across it, and scrambled on deck by the boat tackles, that hung from the davits, as if the jolly-boat had recently been lowered. The vessel was a large Spanish schooner, apparently about one hundred and eighty tons burden, nearly new ; every thing strong and well fitted about her, with a beautiful spacious flush-deck, surrounded by high solid bulwarks. All the boats had disappeared ; they might either have been carried away by the crew, or washed overboard by the sea. Both masts were gone about ten feet above the deck ; which, with the whole of their spars and canvass, and the wreck of the bowsprit, were lumbering and rattling against the lee-side of the vessel, and splashing about in the broken water, being still attached to the hull by the standing rigging, no part of which had been cut away. The mainsail, gaff-topsail, foresail, fore-topsail, fore-staysail, and jib were all set, so she must most likely have gone on the reef, either under a press of canvass in the night, in ignorance of its vicinity, or by missing stays.

She lay on her beam-ends across the coral rock, on which there was about three feet water where shallowest, and had fallen over to leeward, presenting her starboard broadside to the sea, which surged along it in a slanting direction, while the lee gunwale was under water. The boiling white breakers were dashing right against her bows, lifting them up with every send, and thundering them down again against the flint-hard coral spikes, with a loud gritting rumble ; while every now and then the sea made a fair breach over them, flashing up over the whole deck aft. to the tafferel in a snow-storm of frothy flakes. Forward in the bows there lay, in one horrible fermenting and putrifying mass, the carcasses of about

twenty bullocks, part of her deck-load of cattle, rotted into one hideous lump, with the individual bodies of the poor brutes almost obliterated and undistinguishable, while streams of decomposed animal matter were ever and anon flowing down to leeward, although as often washed away by the hissing waters. But how shall I describe the scene of horror that presented itself in the after part of the vessel, under the lee of the weather-bulwarks!

There, lashed to the ring-bolts, and sheltered from the sun and sea, by a piece of canvass, stretched across a broken oar, lay, more than half naked, the dead bodies of an elderly female, and three young women; one of the latter with two lifeless children fastened by handkerchiefs to her waist, while each of the other two had the corpse of an infant firmly clasped in her arms.

It was the dry season, and as they lay right in the wake of the windward ports, exposed to a thorough draft of air, and were defended from the sun and the spray, no putrefaction had taken place; the bodies looked like mummies, the shrunken muscles, and wasted features, being covered with a dry horny skin, like parchment; even the eyes remained full and round, as if they had been covered over with a hard dim scale.

On looking down into the steerage, we saw another corpse, that of a tall young slip of a Spanish girl, surging about in the water, which reached nearly to the deck, with her long black hair floating and spread out all over her neck and bosom, but it was so offensive and decayed, that we were glad to look another way. There was no male corpse to be seen, which, coupled with the absence of the boats, evinced but too clearly that the crew had left the females, with their helpless infants, on the wreck to perish. There was a small round-house on the after part of the deck, in which we found three other

women alive, but wasted to skeletons. We took them into the boat, but one died in getting her over the side; the other two we got on board, and I am glad to say that they both recovered. For two days neither could speak; there seemed to be some rigidity about the throat and mouth that prevented them; but at length the youngest—(the other was her servant)—a very handsome woman, became strong enough to tell us, “that it was the schooner *Caridad* that we had boarded, bound from *Rio de la Hache* to *Savana la Mar*, where she was to have discharged her deck-load of cattle, and afterwards to have proceeded to *Batabano*, in *Cuba*. She had struck, as I surmised, in the night, about a fortnight before we fell in with her; and next morning, the crew and male passengers took to the boats, which with difficulty contained them, leaving the women under a promise to come back that evening, with assistance from the shore, but they never appeared, nor were they ever after heard of.” And here the poor thing cried as if her heart would break. “Even my own *Juan*, my husband, left me and my child to perish on the wreck. Oh God! Oh God! I could not have left *him*—I could not have left *him*.”

There had been three families on board, with their servants, who were emigrating to *Cuba*, all of whom had been abandoned by the males, who, as already related, must in all human probability have perished after their unmanly desertion. As the whole of the provisions were under water, and could not be got at, the survivors had subsisted on raw flesh so long as they had strength to cut it, or power to swallow it; what made the poor creature tell it, I cannot imagine, if it were not to give the most vivid picture possible, in her conception, of their loneliness and desolation, but she said, “no sea-bird even ever came near us.”

It were harrowing to repeat the heart-rending description given by her, of the sickening of the heart when the first night fell, and still no tidings of the boats; the second sun set—still the horizon was speckless; the next dreary day wore to an end, and three innocent helpless children were dead corpses; on the fourth, madness seized on their mothers, and—but I will not dwell on such horrors.

During these manifold goings and comings I naturally enlarged the circle of my acquaintance in the island, especially in Kingston, the mercantile capital; and often does my heart glow within me, when the scenes I have witnessed in that land of fun and fever rise up before me after the lapse of many years, under the influence of a good fire and a glass of old Madeira. Take the following example of Jamaica High-Jinks as one of many. On a certain occasion I had gone to dine with Mr Isaac Shingle, an extensive American merchant, and a most estimable man, who considerately sent his gig down to the wherry-wharf for me. At six o'clock I arrived at my friend's mansion, situated in the upper part of the town, a spacious one-story house, overshadowed by two fine old trees, and situated back from the street about ten yards; the intervening space being laid out in a beautiful little garden, raised considerably above the level of the adjoining thoroughfare, from which it was divided by a low parapet wall, surmounted by a green painted wooden railing. There was a flight of six brick steps from the street to the garden, and you ascended from the latter to the house itself, which was raised on brick pillars a fathom high, by another stair of eight broad marble slabs. The usual verandah, or piazza, ran along the whole front, beyond which you entered a large and lofty, but very darksome hall, answering to our European



drawingroom, into which the bedrooms opened on each side. It did strike me at first as odd, that the principal room in the house should be a dark dungeon of a place, with nothing but borrowed lights, until I again recollected that darkness and coolness were convertible terms within the tropics. Advancing through this room you entered, by a pair of folding doors, on a very handsome diningroom, situated in what I believe is called a back jamb, a sort of outrigger to the house, fitted all round with movable blinds, or *jealousies*, and open like a lantern to all the winds of heaven except the west, in which direction the main body of the house warded off the sickening beams of the setting sun. And how sickening they are, let the weary sentries under the pillars of the Jamaica viceroy's house in Spanish Town tell, reflected as they were there from the hot brick walls of the palace.

This room again communicated with the back-yard, in which the negro houses, kitchen, and other offices were situated, by a wooden stair of the same elevation as that in front. Here the table was laid for dinner, covered with the finest diaper, and snow-white napkins, and silver wine-coolers, and silver forks, and fine steel, and cut glass, and cool green finger-glasses with lime leaves floating within, and tall waxlights shaded from the breeze in thin glass barrels, and an epergne filled with flowers, with a fragrant fresh-gathered lime in each of the small leaf-like branches, and salt-cellars with red peppers in them, &c. &c., all of which made the *tout ensemble* the most captivating imaginable to a hungry man.

I found a large party assembled in the piazza and the dark hall, to whom I was introduced in due form. In Jamaica, of all countries I ever was in, it is a most difficult matter for a stranger to ascertain the real names of

the guests at a bachelor dinner like the present, where all the parties were intimate—there were so many *soubriquets* amongst them; for instance, a highly respectable merchant of the place, with some fine young women for daughters, by the way, from the peculiarity of a prominent front tooth, was generally known as the Grand Duke of Tuscany; while an equally respectable elderly man, with a slight touch of paralysis in his head, was christened Old Steady in the West, *because* he never kept his head still; so, whether some of the names of the present party were real or fictitious, I really cannot tell.

First, there was Mr Seco, a very neat gentlemanlike little man, perfectly well-bred, and full of French phrases. Then came Mr Eschylus Stave, a tall, raw-boned, well-informed personage; a bit of a quiz on occasion, but withal a pleasant fellow. Mr Isaac Shingle, mine host, a sallow, sharp, hatchet-faced, small *homo*, but warmhearted and kind, as I often experienced during my sojourn in the west, only sometimes a little peppery and argumentative. Then came Mr Jacob Bumble, a sleek fat-pated Scotchman. Next I was introduced to Mr Alonzo Smoothpate, a very handsome fellow, with an uncommon share of natural good-breeding and politeness. Again I clapper-clawed, according to the fashion of the country, a violent shake of the paw being the Jamaica infestment to acquaintanceship, with Mr Percales, whom I took for a foreign Jew somehow or other at first, from his uncommon name, until I heard him speak, and perceived he was an Englishman; indeed, his fresh complexion, very neat person, and gentlemanlike deportment, when I had time to reflect, would of themselves have disconnected him from all kindred with the sons of Levi. Then came a long, dark-complexioned, curly-pated slip of a lad, with white teeth and high strongly marked features, considerably pitted with

small-pox. He seemed the great promoter of fun and wickedness in the party, and was familiarly addressed as the Don, although I believe his real name was Mr Lucifer Longtram. Then there was Mr Aspen Tremble, a fresh-looking, pleasant well-informed man, but withal a little nervous, his cheeks quivering when he spoke like shapes of calf's-foot jelly; after him came an exceedingly polite old gentleman, wearing hair powder and a queue, ycleped Nicodemus; and a very devil of a little chap of the name of Rubiochico, a great ally in wickedness with Master Longtram; the last in this eventful history being a staid, sedate-looking, elderly-young man, of the name of Onyx Steady, an extensive foreign merchant, with a species of dry caustic readiness about him that was dangerous enough.—We sat down, Isaac Shingle doing the honours, confronted by Eschylus Stave, and all was right, and smooth, and pleasant, and in no way different from a party of well-bred men in England.

When the second course appeared, I noticed that the blackie, who brought in two nice tender little ducklings, with the concomitant green peas, both just come in season, was chuckling and grinning, and showing his white teeth most vehemently, as he placed both dishes right under Jacob Bumble's nose. Shingle and Longtram exchanged looks. I saw there was some mischief toward, and presently, as if by some preconcerted signal, every body asked for duck, duck, duck. Bumble, with whom the dish was a prime favourite, carved away with a most stern countenance, until he had got half through the second bird, when some unpleasant recollection seemed to come over him, and his countenance fell; and lying back on his chair he gave a deep sigh. But, "Mr Bumble, that breast, if you please—thank you,"—"Mr Bumble, that back, if you please,"—succeeded each other rapidly,

until all that remained of the last of the ducklings was a beautiful little leg, which, under cover of the following story, Jacob cannily smuggled on to his own plate.

“ Why, gentlemen, a most remarkable circumstance happened to me while dressing for dinner. You all know I am next-door neighbour to our friend Shingle—our premises being only divided by a brick wall, about eight feet high. Well, my dressingroom window looks out on this wall, between which and the house, I have my duck pen”——

“ Your what ?” said I.

“ My poultry yard—as I like to see the creatures fed myself—and I was particularly admiring two beautiful ducklings which I had been carefully fattening for a whole week”——(here our friend’s voice shook, and a tear glistened in his eye)—“ when first one and then another jumped out of the little pond, and successively made a grab at something which I could not see, and immediately began to shake their wings, and struggle with their feet, as if they were dancing, until, as with one accord—deuce take me !”——(here he almost blubbered aloud)—“ if they did not walk up the brick wall with all the deliberation in the world, merely helping themselves over the top by a small flaff of their wings ; and where they have gone, none of Shingle’s people know.”

“ I’ll trouble you for that leg, Julius,” said Longtram, at this juncture, to a servant, who whipped away the plate from under Bumble’s arm, before he could prevent him, who looked after it as if it had been a pound of his own flesh. It seemed that Longtram, who had arrived rather early, had found a fishing-tackle in the piazza, and knowing the localities of Bumble’s premises, as well as his peculiarities, he, by way of adding his quota to the entertainment, baited two hooks with pieces of raw potatoes,

and throwing them over the wall, had, in conjunction with Julius the black, hooked up the two ducklings out of the pen, to the amazement of Squire Bumble.

By and by, as the evening wore on, I saw the Long-tram lad making demonstrations to bring on a general drink, in which he was nobly seconded by Rubiochico; and, I grieve to say it, I was noways loath, nor indeed were any of the company.—There had been a great deal of mirth and frolic during dinner,—all within proper bounds, however,—but as the night made upon us, we set more sail—more, as it turned out, than some of us had ballast for—when lo! towards ten of the clock, up started Mr Eschylus to give us a speech. His seat was at the bottom of the table, with the back of his chair close to the door that opened into the yard; and after he had got his breath out, on I forget what topic, he sat down, and lay back on his balanced chair, stretching out his long legs with great complacency. However, they did not prove a sufficient counterpoise to his very square shoulders, which, obeying the laws of gravitation, destroyed his equilibrium, and threw him a somersault, when exit Eschylus Stave, esquire, head foremost, with a formidable rumble-tumble and hurry-scurry, down the back steps, his long shanks disappearing last, and clipping between us and the bright moon like a pair of flails.

However, there was no damage done; and, after a good laugh, Stave's own being loudest of all, the Don and Rubiochico righted him, and helped him once more into his chair.

Jacob Bumble now favoured us with a song, that sounded as if he had been barrelled up in a puncheon, and was *cantando* through the bunghole; then Rubiochico sang, and the Don sang, and we all sang and bumped away; and Mr Seco got on the table, and gave us

the newest quadrille step; and, in fine, we were all becoming dangerously drunk. Longtram, especially, had become uproarious beyond all bounds, and, getting up from his chair, he took a short run of a step or two, and sprang right over the table, whereby he smashed the epergne full of fruit and flowers, scattering the contents all about like hail, and driving a volley of preserved limes like grapeshot, in all their syrup and stickiness, slap into my face—a stray one spinning with a sloppy *whit* into Jacob Bumble's open mouth as he sang, like a musket-ball into a winter turnip; while a fine preserved pineapple flew bash on Isaac Shingle's sharp snout, like the bursting of a shrapnel shell.

“D—n it,” hiccuped Shingle, “won’t stand this any longer, by Ju-Ju-Jupiter! Give over your practicals, Lucifer. Confound it, Don, give over—do, now, you mad long-legged son of a gun!”—Here the Don caught Shingle round the waist, and whipping him bodily out of his chair, carried him kicking and spurring into the hall, now well lit up, and laid him on a sofa, and then returning, coolly installed himself in his seat.

In a little we heard the squeaking of a pig in the street, and our friend Shingle's voice high in oath. I sallied forth to see the cause of the uproar, and found our host engaged in single combat with a drawn sword-stick that sparkled blue and bright in the moonbeam, his antagonist being a strong porker that he had taken for a town-guard, and had hemmed into a corner formed by the stair and the garden wall, which, on being pressed, made a dash between his spindleshanks, and fairly capsized him into my arms. I carried him back to his couch again; and, thinking it was high time to be off, as I saw that Smoothpate, and Steady, and Nicodemus, and the more composed part of the company, had already absconded, I seized my



hat, and made sail in the direction of the former's house, where I was to sleep, when that devil Longtram made up to me.

"Hillo, my little man of war—heave-to a bit, and take me with you. Why what *is* that? what the deuce *is* that?" We were at this time staggering along under the dark piazza of a long line of low wooden houses, every now and then thundering against the thin boards or bulkheads that constituted the side next the street, making, as we could distinctly hear, the inmates start and snort in the inside, as they turned themselves in their beds. In the darkest part of the piazza, there was the figure of a man in the attitude of a telescope levelled on its stand, with its head, as it were, counter-sunk or morticed into the wooden partition. Tipsy as we both were, we stopped in great surprise.

"D—n it, Cringle," said the Don, his philosophy utterly at fault, "the trunk of a man without a head,—how is this?"

"Why, Mr Longtram," I replied, "this is our friend Mr Smoothpate, or I mistake greatly."

"Let me see," said Longtram,—“if it be him, he used to have a head somewhere, I know.—Let me see.—Oh, it is him; you are right, my boy; and here *is* his head after all, and a devil of a size it has grown to since dinner-time to be sure.—But I know his features—bald pate—high forehead and cheekbones.”

*Nota Bene.*—We were still in the piazza, where Smoothpate was unquestionably present in the body, but the head was within the house, and altogether, as I can avouch, beyond the Don's ken.

"Where?" said I, groping about,—“very odd, for deuce take me if I can see his head.—Why, he has none—a phenomenon—four legs and a tail, but no head, as I

am a gentleman—lively enough, too, he is,—don't seem to miss it much." Here poor Smoothpate made a violent walloping in a vain attempt to disentangle himself.

We could now hear shouts of laughter within, and a voice that I was sure belonged to Mr Smoothpate, begging to be released from the pillory he had placed himself in by removing a board in the wooden partition, and sliding it up, and then thrusting his caput from without into the interior of the house, to the no small amazement of the brown fiddler and his daughter who inhabited the same, and who had immediately secured their prize by slipping the displaced board down again, wedging it firmly on the back of his neck, as if he had been fitted for the guillotine, thus nailing him fast, unless he had bolted, and left his head in pawn.

We now entered, and perceived it was really Don Alonzo's flushed but very handsome countenance that was grinning at us from where it was fixed, like a large peony rose stuck against the wall. After a hearty laugh we relieved him, and being now joined by Percales, who came up in his gig, with Mr Smoothpate's following in his wake, we embarked for an airing at half-past one in the morning—Smoothpate and Percales, Longtram and Tom Cringle. Amongst other exploits, we broke into a proscribed conventicle of drunken negroes—but I am rather ashamed of this part of the transaction, and intended to have held my tongue, had Aaron managed his, although it was notorious as the haunt of all the thieves and slight ladies of the place; here we found parson Charley, a celebrated black preacher, *three parts drunk, extorting*, as Mawworm says, a number of devotees, male and female, all very tipsy, in a most blasphemous fashion, the table being covered with rummers of punch, and fragments of pies and cold meat; but this did not

render our conduct more excusable, I will acknowledge. Finally, as a trophy, Percales, who was a wickeder little chap than I took him for, with Longtram's help, unshipped the bell of the conventicle from the little belfry, and fastening it below Smoothpate's gig, we dashed back to Mr Shingle's with it clanging at every jolt. In our progress the horse took fright, and ran away, and no wonder.

"Zounds, Don, the weather-rein has parted—what shall we do?" said I.

"Do?" rejoined Lucifer, with drunken gravity,—  
"haul on the other, to be sure—there is one left, an't there?—so hard a-port, and run him up against that gun at the street corner, will ye? That will stop him, or the devil is in it."

Crash—it was done—and over the horse's ears we both flew like skyrockets; but, strange to tell, although we had wedged the wheel of the ketureen fast as a wreck on a reef, with the cannon that was stuck into the ground postwise between it and the body, there was no damage done beyond the springing of the starboard shaft, so, with the assistance of the negro servant, who had been thrown from his perch behind, by a shock that frightened him out of his wits, we hove the *voiture* off again, and arrived in safety at friend Shingle's once more. Here we found the table set out with devilled turkey, and a variety of high-spiced dishes; and, to make a long story short, we had another set-to, during which, as an interlude, Longtram capsized Shingle out of the sofa he had again laid down on, in an attempt to jump over it, and broke his arm; and, being the soberest man of the company, I started off, guided by a negro servant, for Doctor Greyfriars. On our return, the first thing that met our eyes was the redoubted Don himself, lying on his back

where he had fallen at his leap, with his head over the step at the door of the piazza. I thought his neck was broken ; and the doctor, considering that he was the culprit to be carved, forthwith had him carried in, his coat taken off, and was about striking a phlebotomy into him, when Isaac's voice sounded from the inner apartment, where he had lain all the while below the sofa like a crushed frog, the party in the background, who were *boosing* away, being totally unconscious of his mishap, as they sat at table in the room beyond, enjoying themselves, impressed apparently with the belief that the whole affair was a lark.

" Doctor, doctor," shouted he in great pain,—“ here, here—it is me that is murdered—that chap is only *dead* drunk, but I am really *dead*, or will be, if you don't help.”

At length the arm was set, and Shingle put to bed, and the whole crew dispersed themselves, each moving off as well as he could towards his own home.

But the cream of the jest was richest next day. Parson Charley, who, drunk as he had been overnight, still retained a confused recollection of the parties who had made the irruption, in the morning applied to Mr Smoothpate to have his bell restored, when the latter told him, with the utmost gravity, that Mr Onyx Steady was the culprit, who, by the by, had disappeared from Shingle's before the bell interlude, and, in fact, was wholly ignorant of the transaction. “ Certainly,” quod Smoothpate, with the greatest seriousness, “ a most unlikely person, I will confess, Charley, as he is a grave, respectable man ; still, you know, the most demure cats sometimes steal cream, Charley ; so, parson, my good man, Mr Onyx Steady has your bell, and no one else.”

Whereupon, away trudged Charley to Mr Steady's

warehouse, and pulling off his hat with a formal salaam, "Good Massa Onyx—sweet Massa Teady—pray give me de bell." Here the sable *clerigo* gathered himself up, and leant composedly on his long staff, hat still in hand, and ear turned towards Mr Steady, awaiting his answer.

"Bell!" ejaculated Steady, in great amazement,—  
"bell! what bell?"

"Oh, good, sweet Massa Onyx, dear Massa Onyx Teady, every body know you good person—quiet, wise somebody you is—all person sabe dat," whined Charley; then slipping near our friend, he whispered to him—  
"But de best of we lob bit of fon now and den—de best of we lef to himshesef sometime."

"Confound the fellow!" quoth Onyx, rather pushed off his balance by such an unlooked-for attack before his clerks; "get out of my house, sir—what the mischief do I know of you or your infernal bell? I wish the tongue of it was in your stomach—get out, sir, away with you."

Charley could stand this no longer, and losing patience, "D—n me eye, you *is* de tief, sir—so give me de bell, Massa Teady, or I sall pull you go before de Mayor, Massa Teady, and you sall be shame, Massa Teady; and it may be you sall be export to de Bay of Honduras, Massa Teady. Aha, how you will like dat, Massa Teady? you sall be export may be for break into chapel, during sarvice, and teal bell—aha, teal bell—who ever yeerie one crime equal to dat!"

"My good man," quoth Onyx, who now felt the absurdity of the affair, "I know nothing of all this—believe me there is a mistake. Who sent you here?"

"Massa Smoothpate," roared Charley, "Massa Smoothpate, he who neber tell lie to nobody, Massa Smooth-

pate sent me, sir, so de debil if you no give up de bell I sall"——

"Mr Smoothpate—oh ho!" sung out Steady, "I see, I see"—— Finally the affair was cleared up, a little hush-money made all snug, and Charley having got back his instrument, bore no malice, so he and Steady resumed their former friendly footing—the "*statu quo ante bellum*."

Another story and I have done——

About a week after this, several of the same party again met at dinner, when my excellent friend Mr Nicodemus amused us exceedingly by the following story, which, for want of a better title, I shall relate under the head of

#### A SLIPPERY YOUTH.

"We all know," quoth old Nic, "that house robberies have been very rife of late, and on peril even of having the laugh against me, I will tell you how I suffered, no longer than three nights ago; so, Tom Cringle, will you and Bang have the charity to hold your tongues, and be instructed?"

"Old Gelid, Longtram, Steady, and myself, had been eating *ratoons*, at the former's domicile, and it was about nine in the evening when I got home. We had taken next to no wine, a pint of Madeira a-piece during dinner, and six bottles of claret between us afterwards, so I went to bed as cool as a cucumber, and slept soundly for several hours, until awakened by my old gander—now do be quiet, Cringle—by my old watchman of a gander, cackling like a hero. I struck my repeater—half past one—so I turned myself, and was once more falling over into the arms of Morpheus, when I thought I saw some dark object flit silently across the open window that looks into



the piazza, between me and the deep blue and as yet moonless sky. This somewhat startled me, but it might have been one of the servants. Still I got up and looked out, but I could see nothing. It did certainly strike me once or twice, that there was some dark object cowering in the deep gloom caused by the shade of the orange-tree at the end of the piazza, but I persuaded myself it was fancy, and once more slipped into my nest. However, the circumstance had put sleep to flight. Half an hour might have passed, and the deep dark purity of the eastern sky was rapidly quickening into a greenish azure, the forerunner of the rising moon," ("oh, confound your poetry," said Rubiochico,) "which was fast swamping the sparkling stars, like a bright river flowing over diamonds, when the old gander again set up his gabblement and trumpeted more loudly than before. 'If you were not so tough, my noisy old cock'—thought I—'next Michaelmas should be your last.' So I now resolutely shut my eyes, and tried to sleep perforce, in which usually fruitless attempt, I was actually beginning to succeed, do you know, when a strong odour of palm oil came through the window, and on opening my eyes, I saw by the increasing light a naked negro standing at it, with his head and shoulders in sharp relief against the pale broad disk of the moon, at that moment just peering over the dark summit of the Long mountain.

"I rubbed my eyes, and looked again; the dark figure was still there, but as if aware that some one was on the watch, it gradually sank down, until nothing but the round bullet head appeared above the window sill. This was trying enough, but I made an effort, and lay still. The stratagem succeeded; the figure, deceived by my feigned snoring and quietude, slowly rose, and once more stood erect. Presently it slipt one foot into the room,

and then another, but so noiselessly that when I saw the black figure standing before me on the floor, I had some misgivings as to whether or not it was really a being of this world. However, I had small space for speculation, when it slid past the foot of the bed towards my open bureau—I seized the opportunity—started up—turned the key of the door—and planted myself right between the thief and the open window. ‘Now, you scoundrel, surrender, or I will murder you on the spot.’ I had scarcely spoken the word, when, with the speed of light, the fellow threw himself on me—we closed—I fell—when, clip, he slipped through my fingers like an eel—bolted through the window—cleared the balcony at a bound, and disappeared. The thief had stripped himself as naked as he was born, and soaped his woolly scull, and smeared his whole corpus with palm oil, so that in the struggle I was charmingly lubricated.”

Nicodemus here lay back on his chair, evidently desirous of our considering this the *whole* of the story, but he was not to be let off so easily, for presently Longtram, with a wicked twinkle of his eye, chimed in—

“Ay, and what happened next, old Nic—did nothing follow, eh?”

Nic’s countenance assumed an irresolute expression; he saw he was jammed up in the wind, so at a venture he determined to sham deafness—

“Take wine, Lucifer—a glass of Hermitage?”

“With great pleasure,” said his Satanic majesty. The propitiatory libation, however, did not work, for no sooner had his glass touched the mahogany again, than he returned to the charge.

“Now, Mr Nicodemus, since you won’t, I will tell the company the reason of so nice an old gentleman wearing Baltimore flour in his hair instead of perfumed Mares-

chale powder, and none of the freshest either, let me tell you ; why, I have seen three weavels take flight from your august pate since we sat down to dinner."

Old Nic, seeing he was caught, met the attack with the greatest good-humour—

" Why, I will tell the whole truth, Lucifer, if you don't bother."—" The devil thank you," said Longtram.)—" So you must know," continued Nicodemus, " that I immediately roused the servants, searched the premises in every direction without success—nothing could be seen ; but, at the suggestion of my valet, I lit a small spirit lamp, and placed it on the table at my bed-side, on which it pleased him to place my brace of Mantons, loaded with slug, and my naked small sword, so that, thought I, if the thief ventures back, he shall not slip through my fingers again so easily. I do confess that these imposing preparations did appear to me somewhat preposterous, even at the time, as it was not, to say the least of it, very probable that my slippery gentleman would return the same night. However, my servant in his zeal was not to be denied, and I was not so fit to judge as usual, from having missed my customary quantity of wine after dinner the previous day ; so, seeing all right, I turned in, thus bristling like a porcupine, and slept soundly until daylight, when I bethought me of getting up. I then rose—slipt on my nightgown—and,"—here Nicodemus laughed more loudly than ever,—“ as I am a gentleman, my spirit-lamp—naked sword—loaded pistols—my diamond breast-pin, and all my clothes, even unto my unmentionables, had disappeared ; but what was the cruelest cut of all, my box of Mareschale powder, my patent puff, and all my pomade divine had also vanished ; and true enough, as Lucifer says, it so happened that from the delay in the arrival of the running ships,

there was not an ounce of either powder or pomatum to be had in the whole town, so I have been driven in my extremity—oh most horrible declension!—to keep my tail on hog's lard and Baltimore flour ever since."

"Well but"—persisted Lucifer—"who the deuce was the man in the moon? Come, tell us. And what has become of the queue you so tenderly nourished, for you sport a crop, Master Nic, now, I perceive?"

Here Nicodemus was neither to hold nor to bind; he was absolutely suffocating with laughter, as he shrieked out, with long intervals between—

"Why, the robber was my own favourite body-servant, Crabclaw, after all, and he d——d to him—the identical man who advised the warlike demonstrations; and as for the pigtail, why, on the very second night of the flour and grease, it was so cruelly damaged by a rat while I slept, that I had to amputate the whole affair, stoop and roop, this very morning." And so saying, the excellent creature fell back in his chair, like to choke from the uproariousness of his mirth, while the tears streamed down his cheeks and washed channels in the flour, as if he had been a tatooed Mandingo.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE LAST OF THE LOG.—TOM CRINGLE'S FAREWELL.

“And whether we shall meet again, I know not.”

*Brutus to Cassius, in Julius Cæsar.*

ONE fine morning about this time, we had just anchored on our return from a cruise, when I received, as I was dressing, a letter from the secretary, desiring me instantly to wait on the Admiral, as I was promoted to the rank of commander, (how I did dance and sing, my eye!) and appointed to the Lotus-Leaf, of eighteen guns, then refitting at the dock-yard, and under orders for England.

I accordingly, after calling and making my bow, proceeded to the dock-yard to enter on my new command, and I was happy in being able to get Tailtackle and Reefpoint once more removed along with me.

The gunner of Lotus-Leaf having died, Timotheus got an acting warrant, which I rejoice to say was ultimately confirmed, and little Reefy, now a commander in the service, weathered it many a day with me afterwards, both as midshipman and lieutenant.

After seeing every thing in a fair train on board, I applied for a fortnight's leave, which I got, as the trade which I was to convoy had not yet congregated, nor were they likely to do so before the expiry of this period.

Having paid my respects at the Admiral's pen, I returned to Kingston. Most of the houses in the lower part of the town are surmounted by a small *look-out*, as it is called, like a little belfry fitted with green blinds, and usually furnished with one or more good telescopes. It is the habit of the Kingstonians to resort in great numbers to those *gardemange*-looking boxes, whenever a strange sail appears in the offing, or any circumstance takes place at sea worth reconnoitring. It was about nine o'clock on a fine morning, and I had taken my stand in one of them, peering out towards the east, but no white speck on the verge of the horizon indicated an approaching sail, so I slewed round the glass to the westward, to have a squint at the goings on amongst the squadron, lying at anchor at Port Royal, about six miles off, then mustering no fewer than eighteen pennants, viz. one line-of-battle ship, one fifty, five frigates, two corvettes, one ship-sloop, four eighteen-gun brigs, three schooners, and a cutter. All was quiet, not even one solitary signal making amongst them; so I again scoured the horizon towards the east, when I noticed a very dashing schooner, which had sailed that morning, as she crept along the Palisadoes. She was lying up the inner channel, taking advantage of the land-wind, in place of staggering away to the southward through the ship-channel, already within the influence of the sea-breeze, but which was as yet neutralized close in shore where she was by the *terral*. The speed of the craft—the rapidity with which she slid along the land with the light air, riveted my attention. On enquiry, I found she was the Carthaginian schooner Josefa. At this moment the splash of oars was heard right below where we stood, and a very roguish-looking craft, also schooner-rigged, about a hundred tons burden apparently, passed rapidly beneath us,



tearing up the shining surface of the sleeping harbour, with no fewer than fourteen sweeps. She was very heavily rigged, with her mainmast raking over the tafferel, and full of men. I noticed she had a long gun on a pivot, and several carronades mounted. Presently there was a good deal of whispering amongst the group of half-a-dozen gentlemen who were with me in the lookout, who, from their conversation, I soon found were underwriters on the schooner outside.

“Heyday,” said one, “the Antonio is off somewhat suddenly this morning.”

“Where may that schooner, that is sweeping so handsomely down harbour, belong to?” said I to the gentleman who had spoken.

“To Havanna,” was the answer; “but I fear he intends to overhaul the Josefa there, and she would be a good prize to him, now since Carthagená has thrown off allegiance to Spain.”

“But he will never venture to infract the neutrality of the waters surely,” rejoined I, “within sight of the squadron too?”

The gentleman I spoke to smiled incredulously; and as I had nothing particular to do for a couple of hours, I resolved to remain and see the issue. In a few minutes, the sea-breeze came thundering down, in half a gale of wind, singing through the rigging of the ships alongside of the wharfs, and making the wooden blinds rattle again. The Antonio laid in her sweeps, spread her canvass in an instant, and was lying-to, off the fort at Port Royal, to land her pass, in little more than half-an-hour from the time she passed us, a distance of no less than seven miles, as she had to sail it. In a minute the jibsheet was again hauled over to leeward, and away she was like an arrow, crowding all sail. I had seldom

seen a vessel so weatherly before. In an hour more, she was abreast of the town, and abeam of the Josefa, who, from being cooped up in the narrow inner channel, had, ever since the sea-breeze set down, been bothering with short tacks, about, and about, every minute. Presently the Antonio dashed in through a streak of blue water in the reef, so narrow, that to look at it, I did not think a boat could have passed, and got between the Josefa and Port Royal, when he took in his gaff-topsail, and hauled down his flying-jib, but made no hostile demonstration, beyond keeping dead to leeward, tack for tack with the Josefa; and once, when the latter seemed about to bear up and run past him, I noticed the foot of his foresail lift, and his sails shiver as he came to the wind, as much as to say, "Luff again, my lady, or I'll fire at you." It was now clear Josefa did not like her playmate, for she cracked on all the canvass she could carry; and, having tried every other manœuvre to escape without effect, she at length, with reckless desperation, edged away a point, and flew like smoke through another gap, even smaller and shallower than the one the Antonio had entered by. We all held our breath until she got into blue water again, expecting every moment to see her stick fast, and her masts tumble over the side; but she scraped clear very cleverly, and the next moment was tearing and plunging through the tumbling waves outside of the reefs. Antonio, as I expected, followed her, but all very quietly, still keeping well to leeward, however. Thus they continued for half an hour, running to the southward and eastward, when I noticed the Havanero, who had gradually crept up under the Josefa's lee-quarter, hoist his colours and pennant, and fire a gun at her. She immediately tacked in great confusion, and made all sail to get back through the canal into the

inner channel, with the other schooner close at her heels, blazing away from his long gun as fast as he could load. A Spaniard; who was one of the principal owners of the Josefa's cargo, happened to be standing beside me in the lookout; at every shot, he would, with a face of the most intense anxiety, while the perspiration hailed off his brow, slap his hands on his thighs, and shrink down on his hams, cowering his head at the same time, as if the shot had been aimed at him, and he was trying to shun it, apostrophizing himself, with an agitated voice, as follows:

“Valga me Dios, que demonio, que demonio! Ah, Pancho Roque, tu es ruinado, mi amigo.” Another shot. “Tu es ruinado, chicatico, tan cierto como navos no son coles.” A third flash. “Oh, rabo de lechon de San Antonio, que es eso, que es eso!”\*

Neck and neck, however, in came the Josefa, staggering right through the narrow channel once more, persecuted by the Antonio, with the white breakers foaming and flashing close to on each side of her, but by this time there was a third party in the game. I had noticed a lot of signals made in the flag-ship. Presently one of the sloops of war fired a gun, and before the smoke blew off, she was under weigh, with her topsails, foresail, spanker, and foretopmast-staysail set. This was his Majesty's sloop of war Seaflower, which had slipped from her moorings, and was now crowding all sail in chase of the arrogant Don, who had dared to fire a shot in anger in the sanctuary of British waters. All this while, the Antonio had been so intent on hooking the Carthaginian, that the sloop was nearly up to him before he hove about and gave up the chase; and now the tables were beautifully

\* Thus freely:—“Heaven defend me, what a devil! Ah, Pancho Roque, you are ruined, my fine fellow—you are ruined, my little man, so sure as turnips are not cauliflowers. Oh, tail of St Anthony's pig, that it should come to this!”

turned on him, for the Seaflower's shot was flying over and over him in whole broadsides, and he must have been taken, when, crack, away went the sloop's foretop-gallantmast, which gave the rogue a start. In an hour he was away to windward as far as you could see, and his pursuer and the Josefa were once more at anchor in Port Royal.

That evening I returned to the dock-yard, where I found every thing going on with Lotus-Leaf as I could wish. So I returned, after a three days' sojourn on board, to Kingston, and next afternoon mounted my horse, or rather a horse that a friend was fool enough to lend me, at the agent's wharf, with the thermometer at ninety-five in the shade, and cantering off, landed at my aunt Mrs Palma's mountain residence, where the mercury stood at sixty-two at nightfall, just in time to dress for dinner. I need not say that we had a pleasant party, as Mary was there ; so, having rigged very killingly as I thought, I made my appearance at dinner, a mighty man, indeed, *with my two epaulets* ; but to my great disappointment, when I walked into the piazza, not a soul seemed to acknowledge my promotion. How blind people are ! thought I. Even my cousins, little creole urchins, dressed in small transparent cambric shifts, tied into a knot over their tails, and with devil the thing else on, seemed to perceive no difference, as they pulled me about, with a volley of "Cousin Taam, what you bring we ?"

At length, dinner was announced, and we adjourned from the dark balcony to the diningroom. "Come, there is light enough here ; my rank will be noticed now, surely—but no, so patience." The only males of the party were the doctor of the district, two Kingston gentlemen, young Palma, and Colonel B—— of the guards ; the ladies at dinner being my aunt, Mary, and her younger sister.

We sat down all in high glee ; I was sitting opposite my dearie. “ Deuced strange—neither does *she* take any notice of my two epaulets ;” and I glanced my eye, to be sure that they were both really there. I then, with some small misgivings, stole a look towards the Colonel—a very handsome fellow, with all the ease and polish of a soldier and a gentleman about him. “ The devil, it cannot be, surely,” for the black-eyed and black-haired pale face seemed annoyingly attentive to the *militaire*. At length this said officer addressed me, “ Captain Cringle, do me the honour to take wine.” Mary started at the *Captain*—

“ She gazed, she reddened like a rose,  
Syne pale as ony lily.”

Aha, thought I, all right still. She trembled extremely, and her mother at length noticed it, I saw ; but all this while, B—— was balancing a land-crab on his silver fork, while, with a wine-glass in his other claw, he was ogling me in some wonderment. I saw the awkwardness of the affair, and seizing a bottle of catchup for one of scercial, I filled my glass with such vehemence, that I spilt a great part of it ; but even the colour and flavour did not recover me ; so, with a face like a north-west moon, I swilled off the potion, and instantly fell back in my chair—“Poisoned ! by all that is nonsensical—poisoned—catchup—oh Lord !” and off I started to my bedroom, where, by dint of an ocean of hot water, I got quit of the sauce, and clinching the whole with a caulker of brandy, I returned to the dinner-table a good deal abashed, I will confess, but endeavouring most emphatically all the while to laugh it off as a good jest. But my Mary was flown ; she had been ailing for some days, her mother alleged, and she required rest. Presently

my aunt rose, and we were left to our bottle, and sorry am I to say it, I bumpered away, from some strong unaccountable impulse, until I got three parts drunk, to the great surprise of the rest of the party, for guzzling wine was not certainly a failing of mine, unless on the strong provocation of good fellowship.

Mary did not appear that evening, and I may as well tell the whole truth, that she was pledged to marry me whenever I got my step; and next morning all this sort of thing was duly communicated to mamma, &c. &c. &c., and I was the happiest, and so forth—all of which, as it concerns no one but myself, if you please, we shall say no more about it.

The beautiful cottage where we were sojourning was situated about three thousand feet above the level of the sea, and half way up the great prong of the Blue Mountains, known by the name of the Liguanea range, which rises behind, and overhangs the city of Kingston. The road to it, after you have ridden about five miles over the hot plain of Liguanea, brings you to Hope estate, where an anatomy of an old watchman greeted me with the negro's constant solicitation—"Massa, me beg you for one fee-penny." This youth was, as authentic records show, one hundred and forty years old *only*.—The Hope is situated in the very gorge of the pass, wherein you have to travel nine miles farther, through most magnificent scenery; at one time struggling among the hot stones of the all but dry river-course; at others winding along the breezy cliffs, on mule-paths not twelve inches wide, with a perpendicular wall of rock rising five hundred feet above you on one side, while a dark gulf, a thousand feet deep, yawned on the other, from the bottom of which arose the hoarse murmur of the foliage-screened brook. Noble trees spread their boughs over-



head, and the most beautiful shrubs and bushes grew and blossomed close at hand, and all was moist and cool, and fresh, until you turned the bare pinnacle of some limestone-rock, naked as the summit of the Andes, where the hot sun, even through the thin attenuated air of that altitude, would suddenly blaze on you so fiercely, that your eyes were blinded and your face blistered, as if you had been suddenly transported within the influence of a sirocco. Well, now since you know the road, let us take a walk after breakfast. It shall be a beautiful clear day—not a speck or cloud in the heavens. Mary is with me.

“Well, Tom,” says she, “you were very sentimental last evening.”

“Sentimental! I was deucedly sick, let me tell you—a wine-glassful of cold catchup is rather trying even to a lover’s stomach, Mary. Murder, I never was so sick, even in my first cruise in the old Breeze! Bah! Do you know I did not think of you for an hour afterwards?—not until that bumper of brandy stayed my calamity. But come, when shall we be married, Maria? Oh! have done with your blushing and botheration—to-morrow or next day? It would not be quite the thing this evening, would it?”

“Tom, you are crazy. Time enough, surely, when we all meet in England.”

“And when may that be?” said I, drawing her arm closer through mine. “No, no—to-morrow I will call on the Admiral; and as you are all going to England in the fleet at any rate, I will ask his leave to give you a passage, and—and—and”—

All of which, as I said before, being parish news, we shall drop a veil over it—so a small touch at the scenery again.

Immediately under foot rose several lower ranges of mountains—those nearest us, covered with the laurel-looking coffee-bushes, interspersed with negro villages hanging amongst the fruit-trees like clusters of birds' nests on the hill-side, with a bright green patch of plantain suckers here and there, and a white painted overseer's house peeping from out the wood, and herds of cattle in the Guinea-grass pieces. Beyond these, stretched out the lovely plain of Liguanea, covered with luxuriant cane-pieces, and groups of negro-houses, and Guinea-grass pastures of even a deeper green than that of the canes; and small towns of sugar-works rose every here and there, with their threads of white smoke floating up into the clear sky, while, as the plain receded, the cultivation disappeared, and it gradually became sterile, hot, and sandy, until the Long Mountain hove its back like a whale from out the sea-like level of the plain; while to the right of it appeared the city of Kingston, like a model, with its parade, or *place d'armes*, in the centre, from which its long lines of hot sandy streets stretched out at right angles, with the military post of Up-park camp, situated about a mile and a half to the northward and eastward of the town. Through a tolerably good glass, the church-spire looked like a needle, the trees about the houses like bushes, the tall cocoa-nut trees like harebells; a slow crawling black speck here and there denoted a carriage moving along, while waggons, with their teams of eighteen and twenty oxen, looked like so many centipedes. At the camp, the two regiments drawn out on parade, with two nine-pounders on each flank, and their attendant gunners, looked like a red sparkling line, with two black spots at each end, surrounded by small black dots. Presently the red line wavered, and finally broke up as the regiments wheeled into open column, when the whole

fifteen hundred men crawled past three little scarlet spots, denoting the general and his staff. When they began to manœuvre, each company looked like a single piece in a game at chess; and as they fired by companies, the little tiny puffs of smoke floated up like wreaths of wool, suddenly surmounting and overlaying the red lines, while the light companies breaking away into skirmishers, seemed, for all the world, like two red bricks suddenly cast down, and shattered on the ground, whereby the fragments were scattered all over the green fields, and under the noble trees, the biggest of which looked like *small* cabbages. At length the line was again formed, and the inspection being over, it broke up once more, and the minute red fragments presently vanished altogether like a nest of ants, the guns looking like so many barley-corns, under the long lines of barracks, that seemed no bigger than houses in a child's toy. As for the other *arm*, we of the navy had no reason to glorify ourselves. For, while the review proceeded on shore, a strange man-of-war hove in sight in the offing, looming like a mussel-shell, although she was a forty-four-gun frigate, and ran down before the wind, close to the Palisadoes, or natural tongue of land, which juts out like a bow from Rock Fort, to the eastward of Kingston, and hoops in the harbour, and then lengthens out, trending about five miles due west, where it widens out into a sandy flat, on which the town and forts of Port Royal are situated. She was saluting the admiral when I first saw her. A red spark and a small puff on the starboard side—a puff, but no spark on the larboard, which was the side farthest from us, but no report from either reached our ears; and presently down came the little red flag, and up went the St George's ensign, white, with a red cross, while the sails of the gallant craft seemed about the size of those of a little

schoolboy's plaything. After a short interval, the flagship, a seventy-four, lying at Port Royal, returned the salute. She, again, appeared somewhat loftier; she might have been an *oyster*-shell; while the squadron of four frigates, two sloops of war, and several brigs and schooners, looked like ants in the wake of a beetle. As for the dear little Wave, I can compare her to nothing but a musquitto, and the large 500-ton West Indiamen lying off Kingston, five miles nearer, were but as small cock-boats to the eye. In the offing the sea appeared like ice, for the waves were not seen at all, and the swell could only be marked by the difference in the reflection of the sun's rays as it rose and fell, while a hot haze hung over the whole, making every thing indistinct, so that the water blended into sky, without the line of demarcation being visible. But even as we looked forth on this most glorious scene, a small black cloud rose to windward. At this time we were both sitting on the grass on a most beautiful bank, beneath an orange-tree—the ominous appearance increased in size—the sea-breeze was suddenly stifled—the swelling sails of the frigate that had first saluted, fell, and, as she rolled, flattened in against the masts—the rustling of the green leaves overhead ceased.

The cloud rolled onward from the east, and spread out, and out, as it sailed in from seaward, and on, and on, until it gradually covered the whole scene from our view, (shipping, and harbour, and town, and camp, and sugar estates,) boiling and rolling in black eddies under our feet. Anon the thunder began to grumble, and the zig-zag lightning to fork out from one dark mass into another, while all, where we sat, was bright and smiling under the unclouded noon-day sun. This continued for half an hour, when at length the sombre appearance of the clouds below us brightened into a sea of white fleecy

vapour like wool, which gradually broke away into detached masses, discovering another layer of still thinner vapour underneath, which again parted, disclosing through the interstices a fresh gauze-like veil of transparent mist, through which the lower ranges of hills, and the sugar estates, and the town and shipping, were once more dimly visible ; but this in turn vanished, and the clouds, attracted by the hills, floated away, and hung around them in festoons, and gradually rose and rose until presently we were enveloped in mist, and Mary spoke—"Tom, there will be thunder here—what shall we do?"

"Poo, never mind, Mary ; you have a conductor on the house."

"True," said she ; "but the servants, when the post that supported it was blown down t'other day, very judiciously unlinked the rods, and now, since I remember me, they are, to use your phrase, '*stowed away*' below the house ;" and so they were, sure enough. However, we had no more thunder, and soon the only indications of the spent storm were the increased distinctness of objects at a distance, the coolness and purity of the air, the brighter green of the cane-fields, and the red discoloured appearance of the margin of the harbour, from the rush of muddy water off the land, and the chocolate colour of the previously snow-white sandy roads, that now twisted through the plain like black snakes, and a fleecy dolphin-shaped cloud here and there stretching out, and floating horizontally in the blue sky, as if it had been hooked to the precipitous mountain tops above us. Next day it was agreed that we should all return to Kingston, and the day after that, we proceeded to Mr Bang's Pen, on the Spanish Town road, as a sort of half-way house, or stepping-stone to his beautiful residence in St Thomas

in the Vale, where we were all invited to spend a fortnight. Our friend himself was on the other side of the island, but he was to join us in the valley, and we found our comforts carefully attended to ; and as the day after we had set up our tent at the Pen was to be one of rest to my aunt, I took the opportunity of paying my respects to the admiral, who was then careening at his mountain retreat in the vicinity with his family. Accordingly, I took horse, and rode along the margin of the great lagoon, on the Spanish Town road, through tremendous defiles ; and after being driven into a watchman's hut by the rain, I reached the house, and was most graciously received by Sir Samuel Semaphore and his lady, and their lovely daughters. Oh, the most splendid women that ever were built ! The youngest is now, I believe, the prime ornament of the Scottish Peerage ; and I never can forget the pleasure I so frequently experienced in those days in the society of this delightful family. The same evening I returned to the Pen. On my way I fell in with three officers in white jackets, and broad-brimmed straw hats, wading up to the waist amongst the reeds of the lagoon, with guns held high above their heads. They were shooting ducks, it seemed ; and their negro servants were heard ploutering and shouting amidst the thickets of the crackling reeds, while their dogs were swimming all about them.

“Hillo !” shouted the nearest—“Cringles, my lad—whither bound ? how is Sir Samuel and Lady Semaphore, eh ? Capital sport, ten brace of teal—there”—and the spokesman threw two beautiful birds ashore to me. This wise man of the bulrushes was no less a personage than Sir Jeremy Mayo, the commander of the forces, one of the bravest fellows in the army, and respected and beloved by all who ever knew him, but a regular dare-devil of an



Irishman, who, not satisfied with his chance of yellow fever on shore, had thus chosen to hunt for it with his staff, in the *Caymanas Lagoon*.

Next morning, we set out in earnest on our travels for St Thomas in the Vale, in two of our friend Bang's gigs, and my aunt's ketureen, laden with her black maiden and a lot of bandboxes, while two mounted servants brought up the rear, and my old friend Jupiter, who had descended, not from the clouds, but from the excellent Mr Fyall, who was by this time gathered to his fathers, to Massa Aaron, rode a musket-shot a-head of the convoy to clear away, or give notice of any impediments, of wag-gons or carts, or droves of cattle, that might be meeting us.

After driving five miles or so, we reached the seat of government, Spanish Town. Here we stopped at the Speaker's house—by the way, one of the handsomest and most agreeable men I ever saw—intending to proceed in the afternoon to our destination. But the rain in the forenoon fell so heavily, that we had to delay our journey until next morning; and that afternoon I spent in attending the debates in the House of Assembly, where every thing was conducted with much greater decorum than I ever saw maintained in the House of Commons, and no great daring in the assertion either. The Hall itself, fitted with polished mahogany benches, was handsome and well aired, and between it and the grand court, as it is called, occupying the other end of the building, which was then sitting, there is a large cool saloon, generally in term time well filled with wigless lawyers and their clients. The House of Assembly (this saloon and the court-house forming one side of the square) is situated over against the Government House; while another side is occupied by a very handsome temple, covering in a

statue erected to Lord Rodney, the saver of the Island, as he is always called, from having crushed the fleet of Count de Grasse.

At length, at grey-dawn the next day, as the report of the morning gun came booming along the level plain from Port Royal, we weighed and finally started on our cruise. As we drove up towards St Thomas in the Vale, from Spanish Town, along the hot sandy road, the plain gradually roughened into small rocky eminences, covered with patches of bushes here and there, with luxuriant Guinea-grass growing in the clefts; the road then sank between abrupt little hills—the Guinea corn fields began to disappear, the grass became greener, the trees rose higher, the air felt fresher and cooler, and proceeding still farther, the hills on either side swelled into mountains, and became rocky and precipitous, and drew together, as it were, until they appeared to impend over us. We had now arrived at the gorge of the pass, leading into the valley, through which flowed a most beautiful limpid clear blue stream, along the margin of which the road wound, while the tree-clothed precipices rose five hundred feet perpendicularly on each brink. Presently we crossed a wooden bridge, supported by a stone pier in the centre, when Jupiter pricked a-head to give notice of the approach of waggons, that our cavalcade might haul up, out of danger, into some nook in the rock, to allow the lumbering teams to pass.

“What is that?”—I was driving my dearie in the leading gig—“is that a pistol shot?” It was the crack of the long whip carried by the negro waggoner, reverberated from hill to hill, and from cliff to cliff; and presently the father of gods came thundering down the steep acclivity we were ascending.

“Massa, draw up into dat corner; draw up.”

I did as I was desired, and presently the shrill whistle

of the negro waggoners, and the increasing sharpness of the reports of their whips, the handles of which were as long as fishing rods, and their wild exclamations to their cattle, to whom they addressed themselves by name, as if they had been reasonable creatures, gave notice of the near approach of a train of no fewer than seven waggons, each with three drivers, eighteen oxen, three hogsheads of sugar, and two puncheons of rum.

Come, thought I—if the negroes are overworked, it is more than the bullocks are at all events. They passed us with abundance of yelling and cracking, and as soon as the coast was clear, we again pursued our way up the ravine, than which nothing could be more beautiful or magnificent. On our right hand now rose, almost perpendicularly, the everlasting rocks, to a height of a thousand feet, covered with the richest foliage that imagination can picture, while here and there a sharp steeple-like pinnacle of grey-stone, overgrown with lichens, shot up, and out from the face of them, into the blue sky, mixing with the tall forest trees that overhung the road, festooned with ivy and withes of different kinds, like the rigging of a ship, round which the tendrils of many a beautiful wild-flower crept twining up, while all was fresh with the sparkling dew that showered down on us, with every breath of wind, like rain. On our left foamed the roaring river, and on the other brink the opposite bank rose equally precipitously, clothed also with superb trees, that spread their blending boughs over the chasm, until they wove themselves together with those that grew on the side we were on, qualifying the noonday fierceness of a Jamaica sun into a green cool twilight, while the long misty reaches of the blue river, with white foaming rapids here and there, and the cattle wading in them, lengthened out beneath in the distance. Oh! the very look of it refreshed one unspeakably.

Presently a group of half-a-dozen country *Buccras*—overseers, or coffee-planters, most likely, or possibly larger fish than either—hove in sight, all in their blue-white jean trowsers, and long Hessian boots pulled up over them, and new blue square-cut, bright-buttoned coatees, and thread-bare silk broad-brimmed hats. They dashed past us on goodish nags, followed at a distance of three hundred yards by a covey of negro-servants, mounted on mules, in white Osnaburg trowsers, with a shirt or frock over them, no stockings, each with one spur, and the stirrup-iron held firmly between the great and second toes, while a snow-white sheep's fleece covered their massas' portmanteaus, strapped on to the mail pillion behind. We drove on for about seven miles, after entering the pass, the whole scenery of which was by far the finest thing I had ever seen, the precipices on each side becoming more and more rugged and abrupt as we advanced, until all at once we emerged from the chasm on the parish of St Thomas in the Vale, which opened on us like a magical illusion, in all its green luxuriance and freshness. But by this time we were deucedly tired, and Massa Aaron's mansion, situated on its little airy hill above a sea of canes, which rose and fell before the passing breeze like the waves of the ocean, was the most consolatory object in the view; and thither we drove as fast as our wearied horses could carry us, and found every thing most carefully prepared for our reception. Having dressed, we had a glorious dinner, lots of good wine; and, the happiest of the happy, I tumbled into bed, dreaming of leading a division of line-of-battle ships into action, and of Mary, and of our eldest son being my first lieutenant, and—

“Massa”—quoth Jupiter—“you take cup of coffee, dis marning, massa?”

“ Thank you—certainly.”

It was by this time grey dawn. My window had been left open the evening before, when it was hot and sultry enough, but it was now cold and damp, and a wetting-mist boiled in through the open sash, like rolling wreaths of white smoke.

“ What is that—where are we—in the North Sea, or on the top of Mont-Blanc? Why, clouds may be all in your way, Massa Jupiter, but ”——

“ Cloud ! ” rejoined the deity—“ him no more den marning fag, massa ; always hab him over de Vale in de marning, until de sun melt him. And where is you ?—why, you is in Massa Aaron house, here in St Thomas in de Vale—and Miss ”——

“ Miss ”——said I——“ what Miss ? ”

“ Oh, for you Miss,” rejoined Jupiter with a grin. “ Miss Mary up and dress already, and de horses are at de door ; him wait for you to ride wid him before breakfast, massa, and to see de clearing of de fag.”

“ Ride before breakfast !—see the clearing of the fog ! ”——grumbled I. “ Romantic it may be, but consumedly inconvenient.” However, my knighthood was at stake ; so up I got, drank my coffee, dressed, and adjourned to the piazza, where my adorable was all ready rigged with riding-habit and whip ; straightway we mounted, she into her side-saddle with her riding-habit, and who knows how many petticoats beneath her, while I, Pilgarlic, embarked in thin jean trowsers upon a cold, damp, indeed wet, saddle, that made me shiver again. But I was understood to be in love ; ergo, I was expected to be agreeable. However, a damp saddle and a thin pair of trowsers allay one’s ardour a good deal too. But if any one had seen the impervious fog in which we sat—why, you could not see a tree three yards from you—a cabbage

looked like a laurel bush, Sneezer became a dromedary, and the negroes passing the little gate to their work were absolute Titans.—*Boom*—a long reverberating noise thundered in the distance, and amongst the hills, gradually dying away in a hollow rumble.—“The admiral tumbling down the hatchway, Tom—the morning gun fired at Port Royal,” said Mary; and so it was.

The fire-flies were still glancing amongst the leaves of the beautiful orange-trees in front of the house; but we could see no farther, the whole view being shrouded under the thick watery veil which rolled and boiled about us, sometimes thick, and sometimes thinner, hovering between a mist and small rain, and wetting one's hair, and face, and clothes, most completely. We descended from the eminence on which the house stood, rode along the level at the foot of it, and, after a canter of a couple of miles, we began to ascend a bridle-path, through the Guinea-grass pastures, which rose rank and soakingly wet, as high as one's saddlebow, drenching me to the skin, in the few patches where I was not wet before. All this while the fog continued as thick as ever; at length we suddenly rose above it—rode out of it, as it were.

St Thomas in the Vale is, as the name denotes, a deep valley, about ten miles long by six broad, into which there is but one inlet comfortably passable for carriages—the road along which we had come. The hills, by which it is surrounded on all sides, are, for the most part, covered with Guinea-grass pastures on the lower ranges, and with coffee plantations and provision grounds higher up. When we had ridden clear of the mist, the sun was shining brightly overhead, and every thing was fresh and sparkling with dewdrops near us; but the vale was still concealed under the wool-like sea of white mist, only pierced here and there by a tall cocoa-nut tree rising above



it, like the mast of a foundered vessel. But anon the higher ridges of the grass pieces appeared, as the fog undulated in fleecy waves in the passing breeze, which, as it rose and sank like the swell of the ocean, disclosed every now and then the works on some high-lying sugar estate, and again rolled over them like the tide covering the shallows of the sea, while shouts of laughter, and the whooping of the negroes in the fields, rose from out the obscurity, blended with the signal cries of the sugar boilers to the stockholemen of "Fire, fire—grand copper, grand copper," and the *ca ca'ing*, like so many rooks, of the children driving the mules and oxen in the mills, and the everlasting splashing and panting of the water-wheel of the estate immediately below us, and the crashing and smashing of the canes, as they were crushed between the mill rollers; and the cracking of the wain and waggonmen's long whips, and the rumbling, and creaking, and squealing of the machinery of the mills, and of the carriage-wheels; while the smoke from the unseen chimney-stalks of the sugar-works rose whirling darkly up through the watery veil, like spinning waterspouts, from out the bosom of the great deep. Anon the veil rose, and we were once more gradually enveloped in vapour. Presently the thickest of the mist floated up, and rose above us like a gauze-like canopy of fleecy clouds overhanging the whole level plain, through which the red quenched sun, which a moment before was flaming with intolerable brightness overhead, suddenly assumed the appearance of a round red globe in an apothecary's window, surrounded by a broad yellow sickly halo, which dimly lit up, as if the sun had been in eclipse, the cane-fields, then *in arrow*, as it is called, (a lavender-coloured flower, about three feet long, that shoots out from the top of the cane, denoting that it is mature, and fit to be ground,) and the

Guinea-grass plats, and the nice-looking houses of the bushas, and the busy mill-yards, and the noisy gangs of negroes in the field, which were all disclosed, as if by the change of a scene.

At length, in love as we were, we remembered our breakfast ; and beginning to descend, we encountered in the path a gang of about three dozen little glossy black piccaninies going to their work, the oldest not above twelve years of age, under the care of an old negress. They had all their little *packies*, or calabashes, on their heads, full of provisions ; while an old cook, with a bundle of fagots on her head, and a *fire* stick in her hand, brought up the rear, her province being to cook the food which the tiny little work-people carried. Presently several bookkeepers, or deputy white superintendents on the plantation, also passed,—strong healthy-looking young fellows, in stuff jackets and white trowsers, and all with good cudgels in their hands. The mist, which had continued to rise up and up, growing thinner and thinner as it ascended, now rent overhead about the middle of the vale, and the masses, like scattered clouds, drew towards the ledge of hills that surrounded it, like floating chips of wood in a tub of water, sailing in long shreds towards the most precipitous peaks, to which as they ascended they attached themselves, and remained at rest. And now the fierce sun, reasserting his supremacy, shone once more in all his tropical fierceness right down on the steamy earth, and all was glare, and heat, and bustle.

Next morning, I rode out at daylight along with Mr Bang, who had arrived on the previous evening. We stopped to breakfast at a property of his about four miles distant, and certainly we had no reason to complain of our fare—fresh fish from the gully, nicely roasted yams, a capital junk of salt beef, a dish I always glory in on shore,

although a hint of it at sea makes me quake ; and, after our repast, I once more took the road to see the estate in company of my learned friend. There was a long narrow saddle, or ridge of limestone, about five hundred feet high, that separated the southern quarter of the parish from the northern. The cane-pieces, and cultivated part of the estate, lay in a dead level of deep black mould, to the southward of this ridge, from out which the latter rose abruptly. The lower part of the ridge was clothed with the most luxuriant orange, shaddock, lime, star-apple, breadfruit, and custard apple-trees, besides numberless others that I cannot particularize, while the summit was shaded by tall forest timber. Proceeding along a rough bridle-path for the space of two miles, we attained the highest part of the saddle, and turned sharp off to the right, to follow a small footpath that had been *billed in the bush*, being the lines recently *run* by the land-surveyor between Mr Bang's property and the neighbouring estate, the course of which mine host was desirous of personally inspecting. We therefore left our horses in charge of the servants, who had followed us, running behind, holding on by their tails, and began to brush through the narrow path cut in the hot underwood. After walking a hundred yards or so, we arrived at the point where the path ended abruptly, abutting against a large tree that had been felled, the stump of which remained, being about three feet high, and at least five in diameter. Mr Bang immediately perched himself on it to look about him, to see the *lay* of the land over the sea of brushwood. I remained below, complaining loudly of the heat and confined air of my situation, and swabbing all the while most energetically, when I saw my friend start.

“ Zounds, Tom, look behind you ! ” We had nothing but our riding switches in our hands. A large snake,

about ten feet long, had closed up the path in our rear, sliding slowly from one branch to another, and hissing and striking out its forked tongue, as it twisted itself, at the height of my head from the ground, amongst the trees and bushes, round and round about, occasionally twining its neck round a tree as thick as my body, on one side of the path, and its tail round another, larger in girth than my leg, on the other; when it would, with prodigious strength, but the greatest ease, and the most oily smoothness, bend the smaller tree like a hoop, until the trunks nearly touched, although growing full six feet asunder; as if a tacklefall, or other strong purchase, had been applied; but continuing all the while it was putting forth its power, to glide soapily along, quite unconcernedly, and to all appearance as pliant as a leather thong,—shooting out its glancing neck, and *glowering* about with its little blasting fiery eyes,—and sliding the forepart of the body onwards without pausing, as if there had been no strain on the tail whatsoever, until the stems of the two trees were at length brought together, when it let the smaller go with a loud spank, that shook the dew off the neighbouring branches, and the perspiration from Tom Cringle's forehead—whose nerves were not more steady than the tree—like rain, and frightened all the birds in the neighbourhood; while it, the only unstartled thing, continued steadily and silently on its course,—turning and looking at us, and poking its head within arm's length, and raising it with a loud hiss, and a threatening attitude, on our smallest motion.

“A modern group of the Laocoon—lord, what a neck-cloth we shall both have presently!” thought I.

Meanwhile, the serpent seemed to be emboldened from our quietude, and came so near, that I thought I perceived the hot glow of its breath, with its scales glancing like

gold and silver, and its diamond-like eyes sparkling; but all so still and smooth, that unless it were an occasional hiss, its motions were noiseless as those of an apparition.

At length the devil came fairly between us, and I could stand it no longer. We had both up to this period been really and truly *fascinated*; but the very instant that the coast was clear in my *wake*, by the snake heading me, and gliding between me and Mr Bang, my manhood forsook me all of a heap, and, turning tail, I gave a loud shout, and started off down the path at speed, never once looking behind, and leaving Bang to his fate, perched on his pedestal, like the laughing satyr; however, the next moment I heard him thundering in my rear. My panic had been contagious, for the instant my sudden motion had frightened the snake out of his way, Bang started forth after me at speed, and away we both raced, until a stump caught my foot, and both of us, after flying through the air a couple of fathoms or so, trundled head over heels, over and over, shouting and laughing. Pegtop now came up to us in no small surprise, but the adventure was at an end, and we returned to Mr Bang's to dinner.

Here we had an agreeable addition to our party in Sir Jeremy Mayo, and the family of the Admiral Sir Samuel Semaphore, his lady, his two most amiable daughters, and the husband of the eldest.

Next morning we rode out to breakfast with a very worthy man, Mr Stornaway, the overseer of Mount Olive estate, in the neighbourhood of which there were several natural curiosities to be seen. Although the extent of our party startled him a good deal, he received us most hospitably. He ushered us into the piazza, where breakfast was laid, when uprose ten thousand flies from the breakfast table, that was covered with marmalade, and guava jelly, and nicely roasted yams, and fair white

bread ; and the fragrant bread-fruit roasted in the ashes, and wrapped in plantain leaves ; while the chocolate and coffee pots—the latter equal, in cubic contents, to one of the Wave's water-butts—emulated each other in the fragrance of the odours which they sent forth ; and avocado pears, and potted calipiver, and cold pork hams, and—really, I cannot repeat the numberless luxuries that flanked the main body of the entertainment on a side-table, all strong provocatives to fall to.

“ You, Quacco—Peter—Monkey”—shouted Stornaway—“ where are you, with your brushes ; don't you see the flies covering the table ? ” The three sable pages forthwith appeared, each with a large green branch in his hand, which they waved over the viands, and we sat down and had a most splendid breakfast. Lady Semaphore and I—for I have always had a touch of the old woman in me—were exceedingly tickled with the way in which the *piccaniny mummas*, that is, the mothers of the negro children, received our friend Bang. After breakfast, a regular muster took place under the piazza of all the children on the property, under eight years of age, accompanied by their mothers.

“ Ah, Massa Bang,” shouted one, “ why you no come see we oftener ? you forget your poor piccaniny hereabout.”

“ You grow foolish old man now,” quoth another.

“ You no wort—you go live in town, an' no care about we who make massa money here ; you no see we all tarving here ; ” and the nice cleanly-looking fat matron, who made the remark, laughed loudly.

He entered into the spirit of the affair with great kindness, and verily, before he got clear, his pockets were as empty as a half-pay lieutenant's. His *fee-pennies* were flying about in all directions.

After breakfast we went to view the natural bridge, a



band of rock that connects two hills together, and beneath which a roaring stream rushes, hid entirely by the bushes and trees that grow on each side of the ravine. We descended by a circuitous footpath into the river-course, and walked under the natural arch, and certainly never was any thing finer ; a regular *Der Freyschutz* dell. The arch overhead was nearly fifty feet high, and the echo was superb, as we found, when the sweet voices of the ladies, blending in softest harmony—(lord, how fine you become, Tom!)—in one of Moore's melodies, were reflected back on us at the close with the most thrilling distinctness ; while a stone, pitched against any of the ivy-like creepers, with which the face of the rock was covered, was sure to dislodge a whole cloud of birds, and not unfrequently a slow-sailing white-winged owl. Shortly after the Riomagno Gully, as it is called, passes this most interesting spot, it sinks, and runs for three miles underground, and again reappears on the surface, and gurgles over the stones, as if nothing had happened. By the by, this is a common vagary of nature in Jamaica. For instance, the Rio Cobre, I think it is, which, after a subterranean course of three miles, suddenly gushes out of the solid rock at Bybrook estate, in a solid cube of clear cold water, three feet in diameter ; and I remember, in a cruise that I had at another period of my life, in the leeward part of the Island, we came to an estate, where the supply of water for the machinery rose up within the bounds of the mill-dam itself, into which there was no flow, with such force, that above the spring, if I might so call it, the bubbling water was projected into a blunt cone, like the bottom of a cauldron, the apex of which was a foot higher than the level of the pond, although the latter was eighteen feet deep.

After an exceedingly pleasant day we returned home,

and next morning, when I got out of bed, I complained of a violent itching and pain, a sort of nondescript sensation, a mixture of pain and pleasure in my starboard great toe, and on reconnoitring, I discovered it to be a good deal inflamed on the ball, round a blue spot about the size of a pinhead. Pegtop had come into the room, and while he was placing my clothes in order, I asked him "What this could be—gout, think you, Massa Pegtop—gout?"

"Gote, massa—gote—no, no, him chiger, massa—chiger—little something like one flea; poke him head under de kin, dere lay egg;—ah, great luxury to creole gentleman and lady dat chiger; sweet pain, creole miss say—nice for cratch him, him say."

"Why, it may be a creole luxury, Pegtop, but I wish you would relieve me of it."

"Surely, massa, surely, if you wish it," said Pegtop, in some surprise at my want of taste. "Lend me your penknife den, massa;" and he gabbled away as he extracted from my flesh the chiger bag—like a blue pill in size and colour.

"Oh, massa, top till you marry creole wife,—she will tell you me say true; ah, daresay Miss Mary himself love chiger to tickle him—to be sure him love to be tickle—him love to be tickle—ay, all creole miss love to be tickle—he, he, he!"

By agreement, Mr Bang and I met Mr Stornaway this morning, in order to visit some other estates together, and during our ride I was particularly gratified by his company. He was a man of solid and very extensive acquirements, and far above what his situation in life at that time led one to expect. When I revisited the island some years afterwards, I was rejoiced to find that his intrinsic worth and ability had floated him up into a very extensive business, and I believe he is now a man of

property. I rather think he is engaged in some statistical work connected with Jamaica, which, I am certain, will do him credit whenever it appears. Odd enough, the very first time I saw him, I said I was sure he would succeed in the world; and I am glad to find I was a true prophet. To return: Our chief object at present was to visit a neighbouring estate, the overseer of which was, we were led to believe from a message sent to Mr Bang, very ill with fever. He was a most respectable young man, Mr Stornaway told me, a Swede by birth, who had come over to England with his parents at the early age of eight years, where both he and his cousin Agatha had continued, until he embarked for the West Indies. This was an orphan girl whom his father had adopted, and both of them, as he had often told Mr Stornaway, had utterly forgotten their Swedish,—in fact, they understood no language but English at the time he embarked. I have been thus particular, from a very extraordinary phenomenon that occurred immediately preceding his dissolution, of which I was a witness.

We rode up in front of the door, close to the fixed manger, where the horses and mules belonging to the busha are usually fed, and encountered a negro servant on a mule, with an umbrella-case slung across his back, and a portmanteau behind him, covered with the usual sheep's fleece, and holding a saddle-horse.

"Where is your master?" said Mr Bang.

"De dactor is in de hose," replied quashie. "Busha dere upon dying."

We ascended the rocky unhewn steps, and entered the cool dark hall, smelling strong of camphor, and slid over the polished floors towards an open door, that led into the back piazza, where we were received by the head book-keeper and carpenter. They told us that the overseer

had been seized three days before with fever, and was now desperately ill ; and presently the doctor came forth out of the sick-room.

“ Poor Wedderfelt is fast going, sir—cold at the extremities already—very bad fever—the bilious remittent of the country, of the worst type.”

All this while the servants, male and female, were whispering to each other ; while a poor little black fellow sat at the door of the room, crying bitterly—this was the overseer's servant. We entered the room, which was darkened from the *jealousies* being all shut, except one of the uppermost, which happening to be broken, there was a strong *pensil* of light cast across the head of the bed where the sick man lay, while the rest of the apartment was involved in gloom.

The sufferer seemed in the last stage of yellow fever ; his skin was a bright yellow, his nose sharp, and his general features very much pinched. His head had been shaven, and there was a handkerchief bound round it over a plantain leaf, the mark of the blister coming low down on his forehead, where the skin was shrivelled like dry parchment—apparently it had not risen. There was also a blister on his chest. He was very restless, clutching the bedclothes, and tossing his limbs about ; his mouth was ulcerated, and blood oozed from the corners ; his eyes were a deep yellow, with the pupil much dilated, and very lustrous ; he was breathing with a heavy moaning noise when we entered, and looked wildly round, mistaking Mr Bang and me for some other persons. Presently he began to speak very quickly, and to lift one of his hands repeatedly close to his face, as if there was something in it he wished to look at. I presently saw that it held a miniature of a fair-haired, blue-eyed Scandinavian girl ; but apparently he could not see it, from

the increasing dimness of his eyes, which seemed to distress him greatly. After a still minute, during which no sound was heard but his own heavy breathing, he again began to speak very rapidly, but no one in the room could make out what he said. I listened attentively—it struck me as being like—I was certain of it—it *was Swedish*, which in health he had entirely forgotten, but now in his dying moments vividly remembered. Alas, it was a melancholy and a moving sight, to perceive all the hitherto engrossing thoughts and incidents of his youth and manhood, all save the love of one dear object, suddenly vanished from the tablet of his memory, ground away and abraded, as it were, by his great agony—or like worthless rubbish, removed from above some beautiful ancient inscription, which for ages it had hid, disclosing in all their primeval freshness, sharp cut into his dying heart, the long-smothered, but never-to-be obliterated impressions of his early childhood. I could plainly distinguish the name Agatha, whenever he peered with fast glazing eyes on the miniature. All this while a nice little brown child was lying playing with his watch and seals on the bed beside him, while a handsome coloured girl, a slight young creature, apparently its mother, sat on the other side of the dying man, supporting his head on her lap, and wetting his mouth every now and then with a cloth dipped in brandy.

As he raised the miniature to his face, she would gently endeavour to turn away his hand, that he might not look at one whom she, poor thing, no doubt considered was usurping the place in his fluttering heart, that she long fancied had been filled by herself solely; and at other times she would vainly try to coax it out of his cold hand, but the dying grasp was now one of iron, and her attempts evidently discomposed the departing sinner;

but all was done kindly and quietly, and a flood of tears would every now and then stream down her cheeks, as she failed in her endeavours, or as the murmured, gasped name, *Agatha*, reached her ear.

"Ah!" said she, "him heart not wid me now—it far away in him own country—him never will make me yeeirie what him say again no more."

Oh, woman, woman! who can fathom that heart of thine! By this time the hiccup grew stronger, and all at once he sat up strong in his bed without assistance, "light as if he felt no wound;" but immediately thereafter gave a strong shudder, ejecting from his mouth a jet of dark matter like the grounds of chocolate, and fell back dead—whereupon the negroes began to howl and shriek in such a horrible fashion, that we were glad to leave the scene.

Next day, when we returned to attend the poor fellow's funeral, we found a complete *bivouac* of horses and black servants under the trees in front of the house, which was full of neighbouring planters and overseers, all walking about, and talking, and laughing, as if it had been a public meeting on parish business. Some of them occasionally went into the room to look at the body as it lay in the open coffin, the lid of which was at length screwed down, and the corpse carried on four negroes' shoulders to its long home, followed by the brown girl and all the servants, the latter weeping and howling; but she, poor thing, said not a word, although her heart seemed, from the convulsive heaving of her bosom, like to burst. He was buried under a neighbouring orange-tree, the service being read by the Irish carpenter of the estate, who got half a page into the marriage service by mistake before either he or any one else noticed he was wrong.

Three days after this the admiral extended my leave



for a fortnight, which I spent in a tour round this most glorious island with friend Aaron, whose *smiling* face, like the sun, (more like the nor'west moon in a fog, by the by,) seemed to diffuse warmth and comfort, and happiness, wherever he went, while Sir Samuel and his charming family, and the general, and my dearie, and her aunt, returned home; and after a three weeks' phillandering, I was married, and all that sort of thing, and a week afterwards embarked with my treasure—for I had half a million of dollars on freight, as well as my own particular jewel; and don't grin at the former, for they gave me a handsome sum, and helped to rig us when we got to *Ould* England, where Lotus-leaf was paid off, and I settled for a time on shore, the happiest, &c. &c. &c., until some years afterwards, when the *wee* Cringles began to tumble home so deucedly fast, that I had to cut and run, and once more betake myself to the salt sea. My aunt and her family returned at the same time to England, in a merchant ship under my convoy, and became our neighbours. Bang also got married soon after to Miss Lucretia Wagtail, by whom he got the Slap estate. But old Gelid and my other allies remain, I believe, in single-blessedness until this hour.

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My tale is told—my yarn is ended,—and were I to spin it longer, I fear it would be only bending it “end for end;” yet still I linger, “like the sough of an auld sang” on the ear, loath to pronounce that stern heart-crushing word, that yet “has been and must be,” and which, during my boisterous and unsettled morning, has been, alas! a too familiar one with me. I hope I shall always bless Heaven for my fair blinks, although, as the day has wore on, I have had my own share of lee currents, hard gales, and foul weather; and many an old and dear friend has lately swamped alongside of me, while few new ones have shoved out to replace them. But suffering, that scathes the heart, does not always make it callous; and I feel much of the woman hanging about mine still—even now, when the tide is on the turn with me, and the iron voice of the inexorable First-Lieutenant, Time, has sung out, “Strike the bell eight,”—every chime smiting on my soul as if an angel spoke, to warn me, that my stormy forenoon watch is at length over—that the sun now passing the meridian, must soon decline towards the western horizon, and who shall assure himself of a cloudless setting?

I have, in very truth, now reached the summit of the bald spray-washed promontory, and stand on the slippery ledge of the cliff, that trembles to the thundering of the surge beneath; but the plunge must be made—so at once, Farewell all hands, and God bless ye! If, while chucking the cap about at a venture—but I hope and trust there has been no such thing—it has alighted on the head of some ancient ally, and pinched in any the remotest degree, I hereby express my most sincere and heartfelt regret;

and to such a one I would say, as *he* said, who wrote for all time,

“ I have shot  
Mine arrow o’er the house, and hurt my brother.”

Thus I cut my stick while the play is good, and before the public gets wearied of me ; and, as for the Log, it is now launched, swim or founder ; if those things be good, it will float from its own buoyancy ; if they be naught, let it sink at once and for ever—all that Tom Cringle expects at the hands of his countrymen, is—A CLEAR STAGE, AND NO FAVOUR.

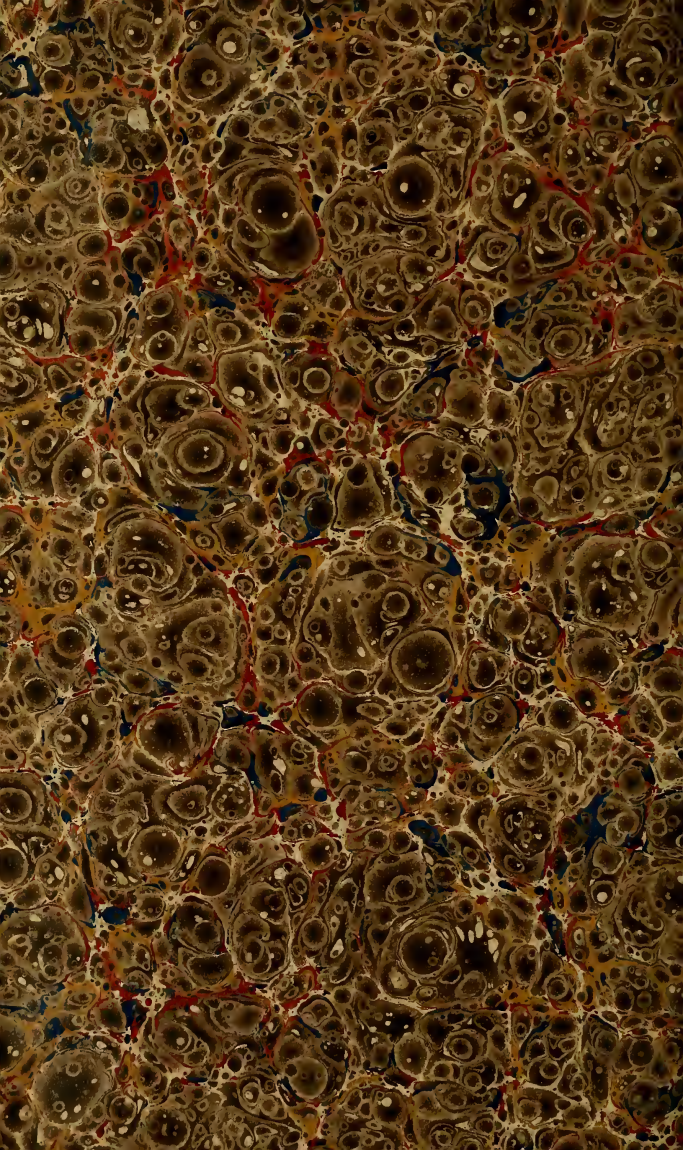
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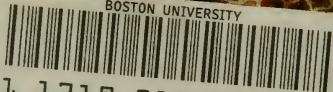








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